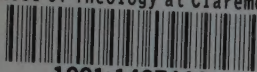


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GEORGE A. MILLER



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THE LIFE EFFICIENT

BY
GEORGE A. MILLER



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TO MY FATHER
REV. MARTIN MILLER
THE EXAMPLE OF WHOSE GODLY LIFE
CONSISTENT AND STRONG
HAS BEEN THE INSPIRATION OF MY MINISTRY

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PREFACE

THIS is an age of keywords, some of which rise to sudden and dizzy popularity, and, being overworked, fall into oblivion before their time. We have had much talk of efficiency, but the word is still sound. There is no danger of too much effectiveness in our lives. What we want to know is how to do the best things in the best way. We are all looking for a maximum of results at the cost of a minimum of forces. And real efficiency has its very vital relation to the problems of Christian life and service.

There are two theories of preaching, both good. Preaching is a delivering of the faith once committed unto the fathers. It is a revealing to ignorant men of the will of God. It is a bringing into life of something from without and above. It is a pointing toward the distant goal and an exhortation to press forward thereto.

But preaching is also something else.

Preaching is the interpretation of daily life in terms of its spiritual values. Preaching is the solving of the perplexing puzzles of experience; it is an illumination of the dark places by the way. Preaching is a revelation of the moral law, not in the sky, but in the drudgery of the common life of mankind. Much of the teaching of Jesus was of this sort. He took the salt and the grass and the seed and the yeast and the sparrow and the penny and the lost sheep and the wayward son, and through the prosaic daily life taught the eternal truth of God. And the drudgery and monotony of the common task and trouble were illuminated and transformed.

These studies make no claim to exegetical or theological value, but they do deal with the great average life of people. If there be within these pages any worth, it is that of relating the common experiences of life to the problems of efficient living.

GEORGE A. MILLER.

San Jose, California, 1913.

I

THE LIFE EFFICIENT

God give us men! A time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith, and ready
hands;

Men whom the lust of office does not kill;

Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;

Men who possess opinions and a will:

Men who have honor, men who will not lie.

Men who can stand before a demagogue

And damn his treacherous flatteries without
winking;

Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog

In public duty and in private thinking;

For while the rabble with their thumb-worn creeds,

Their large profession and their little deeds,

Mingle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,

Wrong rules the land and waiting justice sleeps.

—*Josiah Gilbert Holland.*

A little avoided, a little overlooked, a little remembered, and lo! the jagged edges slip into their places and life becomes an exquisite mosaic.—
Emerson.

I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.—*Paul.*

I

THE LIFE EFFICIENT

THE written and spoken thought of the last decade has revealed an increasing emphasis on life rather than on things. Therein is hope, for progress and improvement must ever be vital rather than material or mechanical. The world must *grow* better by inner moral vitality and spiritual life.

The doctors of society are prescribing some kind of life. There is the *strenuous life*, with its earnest and sometimes frenzied advocates. The *simple life* has had its mild and much neglected followers. The Hindoo seeker found what he called the *abounding life*. The emancipated slave of habit talks exultingly of the *victorious life*. The mystic rejoices in what he calls the *blessed life*. Certainly, multitudes of peoples are leading the *encumbered life*, and all about us is the *meager life*, with its pitiful poverty of means and ideals.

There are a thousand rules for living. We are bidden to "relax" and to "key up." We are exhorted to "be nothing" and to "claim all things." One tells us to fast, another to feast. Diet, exercise, auto-suggestion, culture courses, mystic formulas, Vedic hymns, and hypnotism are offered as cures for the hurt of the human heart—the elixir of life.

Now, what we are after is life that in some definite and knowable way achieves the end for which life exists. What all of us hunger for is something that can justify the whole mystery and toil and tempest of human experience. Formulas which end in themselves are but segments of a vicious circle. Emotions which only quicken the pulse end in reaction. What we long for is life that will register itself in results that definitely make for permanent uplift. The heart is thirsty, not for emotion for its own sake, but for the sense of attaining the thing for which life and heart and soul were created.

There is such life. Paul knew its terms and experienced its power. It is no idle dream nor empty formula. Hosts of men and women have lived it. Jesus was its

supreme example. Nor is it reserved for a few favored souls. In some measure it is set before every man as the measure of divine expectation for his life.

The *efficient life* is not noise, nor is it silence. It is not tension, nor is it passive relaxation. It is not hustle nor hurry nor great effort. It is not measured by talking nor by statistics, nor is it attained by assuming. It is doing the best things in the most effective way and getting results where they will register a mastery of all the forces of circumstance. It is living so that one has an inner sense of doing something worth while and doing it well. It is not feeling that we want, but a sense of effective achievement. The devotee of emotional mysticism talks about "living on the pomegranates of the promised land," by which he means that he has a delicious flutter somewhere in his breast that becomes an end in itself. He who comes to live the efficient life has something better. He knows that he is a worker together with God, and that he is not failing to do in some worthy measure the will of Him who sent him into the world.

Paul expressed his sense of efficiency by saying that he was able to do all things through Christ who empowered him. Are there no limits to achievement? None within the terms of Paul's declaration. "Through Christ" included nothing at variance with God's plan for a life, but it does include everything within that plan. We dream of greatness, of influence, of position and wealth. Can we get them then? Not unless they come within the terms of Paul's formula for efficient living. "Endunamao" sweeps round a mighty circle of human affairs. He who comes within its range can do anything he ought to do, because he is adequately equipped for the task. This was what Paul meant when he said that he had learned the secret of the mastery of life's conditions; he knew how to be abased, and he knew how to abound. In conscious adequacy for anything that life might bring to him, he stood quiet and triumphant before the hidden path that led into to-morrow. He was able.

There are four elements of efficiency. The first is *vision*—clear vision of the actual facts of life. ~~What has that to do~~

with Paul's text? ~~Very much.~~ No man can be efficient by some mystical force that lifts him above the facts of life and makes him independent of nature's laws and daily details. Efficiency is a matter of commonplaces—in adjustment and energized. There are not many people who can look at a thing and really see it. They see their own ideas projected upon the surface of things. They see what they want to see, or what they fear to see. There are plenty of people who set their clocks wrong to fool themselves. Likewise others set their thinking wrong with the same intent. And all self-deception but thickens that "fuzzy-mindedness" which loosens the grasp on reality and lowers ~~the vitality of attack on any task.~~ It takes courage to face facts, but courage is one of the fundamentals of efficient living. He who would attain ~~unto~~ effective living must stop every form of make-believe, clear his eyes of every scale that hangs between his soul and the naked truth. This is hard on people who try to make themselves believe that they are good when they know that they are bad, who pretend they

are succeeding when they know they are piling up failure, who make believe they are well when they know they are sick. Efficiency does not come by that route. This propensity for playing fast and loose with life is one of the first things to be cured in a man who aspires to the life that can do all things through Christ who empowers him—to see clearly the truth.

The second element of efficiency is *consistency*. Growing out of the appetite for pretense is the discrepancy between what we know we ought to do and what we actually do. Always and everywhere there yawns a gulf between ideals and conduct. ~~Christians surely should more completely bridge this chasm than any other people.~~ No life can be efficient which consciously does the things condemned by conscience. So fundamental and axiomatic is this principle that it is as hard to prove as that two and two make four. But assumed as it is by the most rudimentary human creatures, it is not so readily realized that violation of conscience lies at the root of most ineffective and flabby living. The student who is content to do work below

his possible grade of attainment, the mechanic who is willing to slur over work when he could do it as it should be done, anybody who does anything carelessly and is content to let it go at that, is undermining the whole effectiveness of his life and poisoning the stream of life blood at its heart. How can a Christian who fails to connect his ideals and his conduct attain any degree of efficiency in his life? He cannot.

The third element of efficient living is *peace*. Personal adjustment is one of the greatest arts of life. Blessed is the man who acquires a smooth-running, accurate working personality. ~~A four-cylinder,~~ steady working mind is one of the highest gifts of God—and greatest attainments of a lifetime. Fifty per cent of one's effectiveness may easily be lost through internal ~~friction~~. To coördinate the faculties of a human soul, that they may work together harmoniously in the output of life—that is to become humanly efficient. ~~Temper,~~ mental laziness, a balky mind, freakish methods of thought and work, spasmodic ~~spurts of toil~~—these are the sand in the

~~bearings of personality, and they work sad results for the human machine. Perfect adjustment, stable balance, controlled reserve, dynamic poise—these are indispensable for~~
him who would get ready to do all things.

There are a lot of people who live in a world of their own, and never connect with the facts of the life about them. What is the matter? They lack common sense. And what is this so-called common sense? It is the product of some four factors? Here they are: 1. Clear vision of facts. 2. Perfect adjustment of personality—"straight-grained-ness." 3. Unselfishness—un-egotism. 4. A kindly sense of humor. Any man with these four elements will have a likable personality, and unless the element of attraction exist in a life it can never become effective in any high degree. That kind of a man will get along without friction in the home and the shop and the school. He will weigh one hundred per cent of his bulk in the scales of life.

There is a fourth element in efficient living. It is *power*. The other three things are in the man himself. He must see clearly with his own eyes, he must

connect his conduct with his conscience, he must be at peace within and without; but all of these are but the polishing of the lamp, the adjustment of the engine, the regulation of the machine. It will take something more before we can do "all things." It takes power. You cannot become efficient without it. Beyond the common sense, beyond the trained mind, beyond the coördinated personality are higher ranges of being, deeper sources of power. The efficient individual, the efficient church must have something different from the results of culture and the social spirit of effective organization. There are burdens that we can never bear and roads that we can never travel unless there comes to us a strength that is stronger than ours—and different in kind. Unless some Hand be downstretched from heaven to help us, we are lost, and all the pomp and pride of culture and adjustment will avail us nothing in the hour of our testing.

For this enabling through Christ there is no substitute. The man who learns the art of mastery in the unexpected and changing factors of life acquires the knack of adapt-

ing means at hand to ends for which they were not intended. But you can't substitute nor adapt any other factor for the empowering of life through Christ. You can't substitute something else for electricity in the globe or for the pull of the belt on the wheel. You must have power, or be content with something far short of Paul's "all things" as the output of your life. Man must link hands with God if he is ever to get his feet off the earth. The bootstrap method will never work.

This enabled, efficient life is for every man. It is not something that God has reserved for ministers and missionaries. For the ordinary life that tends toward motonony and dead level there is need of higher efficiency and there is supply of highest power. Sometimes we are looking for some great thing and don't know the voice of the Spirit when we hear it. There are people who have the enduement of power and don't know it. They are busy doing the will of God, and the fragrance of their lives spreads benediction everywhere. Like the monk whose shadow wrought healing when it fell behind his unconscious

footsteps among the people, so do these unassuming but efficient saints live lives that spread the contagion of goodness where they go. Be careful how you spoil the aroma of unconscious sainthood! It is a virtue all too rare and a perfume all too fleeting. What we need is more men whose hearts God has touched with his finger of power. Then we can do all things.

God cannot give power to a life that is dim in its vision of facts, that is not true to its ideals, that is clogged by internal friction. But these conditions met, it is gloriously true that "I am able for all things through Christ who empowers me."

II

THE LIFE THAT IS STRONG

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift;
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.

Be strong!

—*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

Then, welcome each rebuff

That turns earth's smoothness rough,

Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!

Be our joy three parts pain!

Strive, and hold cheap the strain;

Learn, not account the pang; dare, never grudge
the throe!

—*Robert Browning.*

Quit you like men, be strong.—*Paul.*

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II

THE LIFE THAT IS STRONG

ONE reason why so few people reach any high degree of efficiency in life is this: they are too weak. Much sinning is more weakness than wickedness. Right living is largely a matter of strength and health. One of the commonest excuses for non-efficiency is lack of power, of means, of ability, of money—all forms of weakness.

A host of people have never comprehended the vastness of the task assigned to the followers of Jesus Christ. We catch a single phase—the Sunday service, the children's class, the social meeting, the mission field—and rest with that. But the program of Jesus included the reorganization of society, the renewal of humanity's vital forces and the re-creation of the very inmost nature of the human heart itself. Even to begin that task will take more power than most of us have yet dreamed of.

God never intended his workers to fail

for lack of power. The Bible is the strongest book ever written, and it abounds in words of power. Strong men lead its hosts and set its standards, and a thousand exhortations to be strong come to us from its pages. To a band of timid disciples Jesus said, "All power is given unto me"; and then, to make it sure, he added, "Lo, I am with you always." "Be strong, be strong," rings like a divine challenge through the record.

Yet you cannot be strong by merely wishing for strength. You can't be rich by thinking riches, nor handsome by thinking of your looks, any more than you can be well by thinking of health when you have typhoid fever. If you are going to be a strong Christian, you will have to be alive; that is the preliminary to all strength, for the Christian's strength is not static but dynamic. It is not mineral but organic. It is not mechanical but vital. There is a sense in which all strength must bear the touch of life. John Ruskin became discouraged with the lack of high success among the factory operatives and went to the Continent to study the laws of archi-

itecture as set forth in the great cathedrals. And when he had finished his book it contained laws of life and character, although the terms were those of arch and tower. If we are to think of being strong, we must first of all be alive; and if we are to be alive, we must get very close to Jesus Christ, for the life that becomes strong is his life. And when we do that we will be born again. Then it will be time to talk about becoming strong.

There are three laws of strength. The first is *truth*. And truth is more than mere veracity of statement. Ruskin found some buildings intact through the centuries, but he found others crumbling to decay, not because of the profane hand of any iconoclast, but because there were false stones in the foundations. He found rain dripping over priceless frescoes because there was false workmanship in the roof. He found columns that had been painted to look like marble, but they were only imitation plaster, and they crumbled away in ugliness inexpressible. The earthquake of 1906 revealed a lot of lying building in California. There was trash where con-

crete had been specified, and ruin followed.

Out of all this comes the law that all untruth is weakness. An untrue link in a cable means a ship on the rocks. Lying plumbing means a family sick with fever. A lying rail means a wrecked train. Every lie is weakness, and the first law of strength is truth, utter sincerity, frankest honesty in the innermost citadel of the heart, and from that to the outer circumference of life. It was not chance by which John noted that in the Eternal City there would be "none that loveth and maketh a lie." If untruth is ruin to inanimate buildings, how much more to a living soul!

There is nothing so strong as the naked truth. There is no scheme that is half as strong as a straight game. The naked truth is infinitely stronger than any painted bravery that men may apply. A man may make up a part; he may pose and prance and smile; he may pretend and assume a professional air, but very soon he will bear down on the scales of life with just what he inwardly is, not an ounce more. No one is deceived by the make-up except

the man who puts it on himself. If you would be strong, be utterly sincere and absolutely true.

The second law of strength is *obedience*. Cathedral walls are strong only when they obey the law of gravity. The great paradox of nature is this: that one is free only in so far as he becomes the servant of law. The higher the law, the more perfect his obedience and the greater his freedom and strength. Obey the physical law and find health—physical strength. Obey the moral law and find strength of character. Obey the civil law and find freedom from legal restraint. Obey the law of Christ and find strength of soul.

Obedience is the key to the uppermost realm of character. We may live along on lower levels and sometimes never know what we are losing; but if we would have our personalities raised to the upper powers of strength, we must learn the law of obedience. The law of consciousness becomes operative when the child first learns to say "I am." The law of power arises when he learns to say "I can." The law of duty is made manifest when he first knows

"I ought." And beyond these lies the innermost citadel of being, the image of God in volition, "I will"; and obedience is the highest function of the will. The supreme act in the life of Jesus was when he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Obedience links our lives with the unseen forces. A lantern slide is a small picture, visible to one person at a time. When it becomes obedient to the laws of light and projection and focus it is multiplied a thousand times upon a screen and may be seen by a thousand persons. A small boy went fishing one day with five biscuit and two sardines for a lunch, hardly sufficient for a boy's appetite. Jesus came that way with a hungry multitude. The boy obeyed the invitation to bring his loaves and fishes to Jesus, and behold! they were multiplied five thousand times. The resources of your personality are scarcely sufficient for your own needs, but bring them to Jesus in obedience, and there is found enough to feed five thousand.

The third law of strength is *sacrifice*. You never can be strong without sacrifice.

There is a selective necessity in all life if it is to become strong. Life offers a thousand doors. To enter one of them you must sacrifice nine hundred and ninety-nine others. Yet the one door entered, and its gifts realized, offers far more than the other doors unentered. Choice always means sacrifice, yet only by choice can you realize and possess. The greatest things are always the simplest because they have sacrificed all needless ornament and complex hindrances. To be strong you must be simple and direct. There was a man in Stanford University years ago. From him we learned the lesson of utter simplicity and thorough sincerity. After he died I visited his grave and found there a single boulder of unhewn sandstone. It bore the touch of no man's hand or tool, and stood there in its rugged naked truth, fitting monument for such a man. Beauty must be simple. Speech to be strong must be simple. All great, strong men are simple and approachable.

We talk of sacrifice. Livingstone "gave up" a weaver's shuttle for the wilds of Africa. A sacrifice? Yes; but who would

ever have heard of his name otherwise? Sacrifice—but power! Jane Addams gave up travel and leisure for the slums of Chicago—and found immortality. Frances Willard and Moody and the hosts of the world's redeemers gave up something, but what they got was so much bigger that it never occurs to us that they made any sacrifice. Shame on us to talk of sacrifice! What have we ever done that has cost us anything, even ordinary inconvenience? For every so-called sacrifice that we have made there have come into our lives a richness and power that have balanced the account on the other side. And yet there are weaklings in the church who gasp and pant along because they are afraid of sacrifice. If once they let God have his way with them, he might take something away from them and harm them in some way. Sacrifice is the only door to larger life, to greater strength. Some one had to give up something for every ounce of moral good that the old world has ever gained, and Some One had to die on the cross, or the world could never be redeemed. The path may be strewn with stones, but His feet

have felt them first. It may be bordered with thorns, but His brow has worn them. At its end there may stand a cross, but He hung on it, and from that cross has streamed the greatest flood of moral force and spiritual life that humanity has ever known. Sacrifice? Yes, but strength. Is the disciple over his Master? Is the servant above his Lord, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despised the shame and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross?

Are you strong? How strong? As strong as you are true; as strong as you are obedient, as strong as the measure of your sacrifice.

III

FLYING, RUNNING, WALKING

This is the gospel of labor—ring it, ye bells of the kirk—

The Lord of love came down from above, to live with the men who work.

This is the rose that he planted, here in this thorn-cursed soil;

Heaven is blessed with perfect rest, but the blessing of earth is toil.

—*Henry van Dyke.*

Get leave to work

In this world—'tis the best you get at all;

For God in cursing, gives us better gifts

Than men in benediction. God says "Sweat

For foreheads"; men say "crowns," and so we are crowned—

Ay, gashed by some tormenting circlet of steel

Which snaps with secret spring. Get work; get work;

Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.—*Isaiah. 40³¹*

III

FLYING, RUNNING, WALKING

Isa. 40. 31

A PROCLAMATION of release for the captives! In a half century of bondage no hope has arisen until the Voice breaks forth, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people." What matters it whose the human name that brought the Voice? God's eternal message to the exiles of earth found a mouthpiece. In the long night, staggering under the heavy burdens, Israel heard what sooner or later comes to every afflicted soul—the promise of release.

The terms of the proclamation throb with a boundless reserve of untested forces: "They that wait upon the Lord," "renew their strength," "Power to the faint," "He increaseth strength," "There is no searching of his understanding." Who with ears to hear can listen to this herald without knowing that for the child of God there is a ministry of help and healing not often received by those who need it most?

You can imitate the effects of a battery, but no one is deceived thereby. You can devise a spurious system of helping the physical needs of men, you can bring bogus comfort by denying facts, you can pretend to experiences that you do not possess, but this is a different matter. "They that wait," they that "weave," are interwoven with the Lord, shall renew their depleted life forces and be made over anew with spiritual forces. This is the secret of the overcoming life.

It is no accident that the first step toward the climax of divine power in a human life is that of mounting up with wings as eagles. This is usually first. The exuberance of first love, the enthusiasm of a new experience, always mounts up. The reaction from despair always rebounds upward. The newborn soul shouts. The sudden sense of freedom that accompanies release from the burden of sin and condemnation may well give forth a shout. It is not strange that such a soul should soar aloft in exultant, victorious flight.

The eagle flights of life are to be treasured. There are all too few of them. The

memory of their uplift and wide vision may cheer many a dark valley and rough road later on. And the eagle flight will lift the exultant soul above many a rough place that would tear the feet and cause to stumble. Mounting up with wings of eagles is not so difficult, after all, when once you learn the secret of it. For ages men tried to navigate the air, and when at last they succeeded the secret was very simple. It needed but a single principle—the horizontal plane—and a single power strong enough and light enough to drive the plane against gravity. The soaring soul needs but a single principle—that of trust in the spiritual atmosphere—and a single force, faith in God, strong enough to rise above the rugged road and fly.

There are some difficulties that are easier to pass in the air than any other way. It is better to fly over than to burrow under, or dig through, or break to pieces on the rocks. Don't make the mistake of thinking that it is hard to fly; it is easy. Did you ever watch an eagle fly? Does he flap his wings and mount with great exertion to the zenith? Not at all.

Nothing is more graceful nor more effortless than an eagle's flight. It's all in the knack of trusting the air—provided you have wings. The flights of the soul are not matters of great effort, they are all in the knack of trusting in God, provided your soul has wings. No wings, no flight. And every Christian is entitled to some flights in the sky. Some of them come very early in his experience; and what were more fitting than that the novitiate should be taken up on high and given a bird's-eye view of the length and breadth of the goodly land he has come to possess?

Then there is a degree in advance of flying. It is running. It takes more grace to run on the earth than to fly in the sky. Some very high flyers can't run at all. They stumble and soon grow weary and faint by the wayside. Perhaps the people of whom we never hear except in the eagle flights may represent the ten-talent men, the few who do the great and spectacular things. But the unwearied runners are those who keep steadily at it, making swift and steady progress in the affairs of life. The five-talent men handle the

great bulk of the world's interests, and handle them efficiently. Verily, this takes more wisdom and perseverance and tact and skill than the occasional flights, but there is grace enough for this also. What would become of the world without the men and women who live on a plane of continuous high efficiency? Some geniuses have been very helpless when once their feet touched the solid ground. No man can live in the air all the time. When you get down to the hard reality of life, running comes next in the progress of experience. Perhaps you are not a great flyer, but can you run and not grow weary? If so, blessed are you, for you have learned the secret of the efficient life.

There is a third degree in this scale of efficiency. It is walking. Walking is harder than running and running is harder than flying. It often happens that the soul that set out so exultingly through the air ere long finds its feet on the earth, and settles down to a walk. Then the test comes. Few people become discouraged while they are in the air. Not many complain of monotony while they are swiftly

running with the King's message. But when it gets down to monotonous, dreary trudging along the rough path all the demons of despair rise up and encamp round about that soul to say, "Turn back; this is too hard." An eagle is a graceful and victorious sight in the air. Did you ever see an eagle try to walk? Even the swift runners of life's highly efficient men will often break down under the dull discouragement of a life that permits only of weary plodding.

The walkers are the multitudes who carry the world's heavy loads and do the great, unrecognized service of life. They are the people who do the uninteresting, unrewarded tasks. More than half of the world's work is just sheer drudgery. There is no swing of inspiration in doing it, and there is no shout of appreciation from any waiting multitude when it is done. Streets must be swept, dishes washed, engines cleaned, houses swept, machinery repaired, money collected, communities canvassed, children washed and taught, railroads kept in repair—a thousand small tasks out of sight, but necessary if some official is to

make the eagle flight and receive the public applause. Somewhere in the archives of eternity are stored the books of God, wherein are recorded the millions of unnoticed and unrewarded tasks done by those who have learned to walk and not faint. It takes more strength to run than to fly, and still more to plod, but there is grace enough for even the walkers in the dusty highway of life.

By and by the books will be opened, the records read, the crowns awarded. There will be some surprises in that day. The great men whom the world has honored for their eagle flights will be there, and will receive their reward. The strong runners who have steadily done the big, useful, and usually recognized things will be taken care of too. But the walkers, the folks we never thought of, who stuck to it, and did the monotonous things whether anyone knew it or not, for them will be reserved glorious crowns of efficiency.

There are some men who have a faculty of getting onto convention programs and talking eloquently about work. Verily, they have their reward. There are others

who don't shine so much on the program, but they get results at home. There are people who make a great appearance when there is a dress parade, but they are out-distanced by the folks who can walk and not faint. One day we gathered up the gifts of the people for a new church. There was exultation, and when the sum reached the desired figure we shouted over the list of those who had helped. There was one very poor and unlearned man in the church who had no money to give; his name was not on the list. But the next day he came with his pick and spade and for a week dug and raked until the lot was prepared for the new temple. His name never appeared on the subscription list, and he never noticed its omission, but he also served, and there was grace enough to keep him at work unnoticed and unknown till the work was done.

Does anyone feel, "My way is hid"? Is there so much walking? Is the path obscure and rough? If so, yours is the climax of grace. The sparrows are all numbered and noticed, as well as the eagles. The hairs of our heads are all kept account of,

and their color is noted too. "Fear thou not, for I am with thee!" The eagle's wing, the runner's swift foot, and plodder's bending back are all alike to the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not, neither is weary.

What we need is to learn the secret of drawing upon our reserves of power. We are poor because we don't cash our checks. We are weak because we don't practice our help. What we need is the secret of receiving. Don't beg God to help—accept the help he offers. Don't agonize—trust. When you have learned to do that you can fly or run or walk all day in a hidden path and never grow faint.

By and by, when the march is over, we shall all gather home. And when the saints come marching in the flyers may come first. There will be many of them, and they will be welcomed and assigned to their high places. Next will come the runners who have not grown weary. There will be more of them than of the flyers. They will have a greater welcome. They will shine in brilliant service. And after them will come an exceeding great multitude

that no man can number. From the north and the south they will come, from the east and the west. "Who are these that rise from everywhere?" "These are they who did the common work, who wrought its dreary tasks, who toiled through the long earth night, who walked the path with weary feet and aching back—who kept at it and never grew faint." And when these join in the chorus, they will drown out all the rest.

IV

FIRST THINGS

We would fill the hours with the sweetest things
If we had but one day;
We should drink alone at the purest springs
In our upward way;
We should love with a lifetime's love in an hour
If the hours were few;
We should rest not for dreams, but for fresher power
To be and to do.

We should waste no moments in weak regret
If the day were but one;
If what we remember and what we regret
Went out with the sun;
We should be from our clamorous selves set free
To work and to pray,
And to be what the Father would have us to be,
If we had but a day.

—*Mary Lowe Dickinson.*

Like the star
That shines afar
Without haste
And without rest,
Let each man wheel with steady sway
Round the task that rules to-day,
And do his best!

—*Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.*

Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.—*Jesus.*

mt 6³³

IV

FIRST THINGS

LIFE is a problem in proportion. Order is at least one of heaven's great laws, and the most effective lives have been most successful in adjusting all the factors of living in their relative order. To find first things and get them into first place is surely to find all other things added and in order. Paul had the idea of proportion when he exhorted the Corinthian Christians that all things be done decently and *in order*.

Jesus did more to clear the issues of life than anyone who has ever lived. Since he came and lived there has never been any doubt as to just what the first things are—at least there is no need of doubt. For it is still true that for many people life is a milky way containing various issues in nebulous form. Fog to the right, and fog to the left, and confusion all about, may well mark the chart of the life without

proportion. Through this jungle of mists comes one clear voice; if we will heed it, we need never doubt what are the real things and what are incidental.

The major problem of life is that of its dominant note, its central issue, its great first thing. The one supreme business of living is to get that decisive emphasis on the thing that is first. The supreme tragedy of life comes to the man who gets the major emphasis on something else than the first thing. All life is then out of proportion, all experience a tangle, and all tasks in confusion. There are strong lives that stagger and sink because they have missed the course. There are men of genius who go out in despair because they have put the major emphasis on the wrong thing. It is no more possible to bring strength to a life with a false axis than to keep the solar system in order with some other body than the sun as its center. Poe and Byron and Burns and Shelley and De Quincey and Napoleon and Nero and Saul were men who got the emphasis in the wrong place, and their splendid lives crashed to inglorious ruin. Lesser men in

lesser measure exhibit the same tragedy of misplaced emphasis and disordered lives. ✓

The test of proportion in life is in the fact that the "other things" are added, when the first things are first. If the tonic key-note is right, the harmonics are present and in their places. By this we may know when a life is in balance with its keynote—the upper harmonies ring true. This is the difference between noise and music. Music has harmonics in such strength and pitch that beauty follows tone as light follows the sunrise. Noise is sound with the emphasis on a false note, and if there be any harmonics they are discordant, out of relation, and the total result is harshness, or dullness, but it is not music. Even good things in the wrong place become wrong. Too much emphasis on an overtone produces an unpleasant sound. Any emphasis at all on a discord means confusion. Good men who take single tones out of the scale of life and put the major emphasis thereon to the exclusion of other related issues, do not make music. They usually make cranks of themselves. And what is a crank but a man

who has got the dominant emphasis on the wrong note! ✓

We have several good, useful notes in our lives that serve high purposes, but were never intended for first place. When one of them gets to the place of central interest, all life, that is, "all other things," fall out of place, and confusion and abnormality result.

This is a commercial age. Commercialism in itself may not be a bad thing. In the present stage of social evolution it seems to be a necessary factor in community life. Money is a good thing in itself. We sometimes talk about money as if it were a sort of personified spirit of evil. In fact, it has no moral quality whatever; it is nothing but a material thing, valuable only in its power to control other things and men. It is a convenience, nothing more. We all need a little of it, for it facilitates the problems of adjustment to the world about us. But once let money become the end of living, let it get into the first place, and see what happens. "Seek ye first" the making of money, and all other things and issues of life are thrown

out of proportion. Instead of inner peace, there is internal strain. In place of the fruits of the Spirit, there are the fruits of neurasthenia and the atmosphere of selfishness. There are few things more pitiable than the sight of the modern rich man driven to ceaseless strain in his effort to make his millions earn yet other millions in order that millions yet to come may flow into a fortune which is already vastly beyond his power to use or enjoy. The wrong thing is in first place in his life. And the proof of the unbalance is in this: the harmonics of life—love, joy, peace, patience, friendship, love of nature and people—are not present. All other things cannot be added to the man who has misplaced his central motive in life. There are ministers of the gospel who have shifted their deeper interest in life to the accumulation of money, and while they frequently know not that the Spirit has departed from them, their congregations know it and suffer.

Social life has its God-given place in human experience, but it is not the first place. And it needs no argument to prove that when social considerations get into

the place of first interest in life everything else is out of joint. The artificial, useless, butterfly life of the idle rich tells its own story of hungry hearts, dissatisfied spirits, and frantic and foolish attempts to find satisfaction in a round of festivities that leave behind them a trail of headaches and jealousies. A few years ago there appeared a book called No. 10 John Street, which essayed to paint a cross section of the life of a man whose first thing in life lay in the social details of the rich aristocracy. If the picture were true, it were enough to send a man to a desert island or an African jungle to find happiness.

Recreation is a God-given necessity of moral natures. The sense of humor is closely akin to the highest and finest functions of the human spirit. Relaxation is as essential as bread and meat. Amusements are part of God's program for people. Too long has the church proscribed and prohibited the social instincts of young people, enumerating carefully a list of "Thou-shalt-nots," but offering very little by way of substitute. When the membership fails to increase, the finances run low, and the

experts begin to look for the cause, it is always easy to begin to talk about the sins of the worldly young people. When, O when, will we begin to understand the law of youth and age, and allow each to follow its own God-given law without prescription from the other? Now the whole trouble with the "amusement problem" is in getting it out of its rightful place in life. When people cannot keep out of their work-hour thoughts the "fun" of the night before, or that which is to come with the day following, they are out of proportion, and a lot of folks nowadays are in danger of becoming amusement mad. And by the laws of the test, when amusements get out of their secondary place into first place, not only are "all other things" not added, but we lose the very thing we are after, and our fun goes stale.

It is easily possible to pervert the word of truth by false emphasis. Who among us has not met the man who has gotten some secondary truth of revelation into first place and thereby distorted his whole moral perspective? The Bible itself becomes no longer a savor of life unto life

if we use it for controversy, for display of skill in argument, or mental gymnastics. It has been used as a justification of polygamy, murder, tyranny, and every form of abuse and intolerance known to man, all because of a false emphasis. When we go to the Bible for any other purpose than to find therein the revealed will of God we are likely to go astray. And the test of the matter is the extent to which all other things fall into line with the life that gets first things first. When sound thinking and the grace of kindness and common sense and the peace of God are absent from the life of a devotee of Bible study, rest assured that there is something wrong with his major emphasis.

It has happened that churches have been organized about a single idea, with the inevitable result—the “other things” are absent. The one idea may be institutionalism, or ritualism, or baptism, or sanctification, or social life, or other good things, but any good second thing in first place means want of focus.

Jesus said that the great first thing of life is the kingdom of God and his right-

eousness. His program for life must come first. It may and does include every good thing, but all the good "things" and factors of life must take their place among the "other things." | The first place in the church belongs to the personal Spirit of the living God. No schemes, or methods or devices, or human energy or means will take the place of that kingdom. No temple was ever builded glorious enough to get along without the King in his beauty. No "plant" was ever planned and erected complete enough to do without "his righteousness." Jesus himself is the glorious and triumphant "First" in his church and in the hearts of his people. If he is in his own place, other things will fall into line readily enough. But when he is absent from his throne in the temple, and from his sanctuary in the heart, everybody knows that something is wrong, and usually no two of us can just agree on what the trouble may be. One says we need a new pastor. The minister feels that he should move somewhere else: there are "peculiar difficulties" in this place. Often it is claimed that a new church building will

solve the problem. More church dinners are proposed; perhaps a bazaar will help. A new organ, and, above all, a paid quartet may be able to tickle the ears of the drowsy congregation and stimulate the tardy nickels and dollars to slip into the contribution plate. On one thing we are all agreed—something is wrong. “All these other things” are not being added unto us; the harmonics of the church are silent or out of tune.

Are the times out of joint? No more than other times have been and will be out of joint. But it is significant that in an age that has been dominated by materialism we have had reactions toward mysticism in its baldest and most irrational forms. The human heart is hungry—there’s the trouble. It is hungry for the Divine Heart of life, for the Comforter, for the strong hand of divine control that shall organize about one great spiritual motive every disconnected fragment of life and bring into glorious music the harmonics that have long been making nothing but discords in our experiences.

Proportion is a law that begins its appli-

cation to life in the small and prosaic details of the day's events. The little things must exhibit proportion as well as the large affairs. Moments must be in order as well as years. In the day's working life Jesus must have first place. The first moments of the waking consciousness belong to him. The morning watch is his alone. A meal comes from him; well may we pause in recognition of his benefits before we partake. The first consideration in business affairs belongs to the King of our lives. The first division of our money belongs to him. True, the letter may become fatal if there be no spirit within, but there are no spiritual deaths from over-emphasis on the first things as belonging to the kingdom of God.

The surest way to get the second things is to go after the first things first. Many things do not very much matter, when, or where, or how, but some do tremendously matter and unless we get these things in place, it is useless to try to get the other things at all.

When the world comes at last in the fullness of time to realize the kingdom of

God, it will be a recreated world. Its every relation of life will be renewed. Competition and greed and unequal rewards of industry will give way to a kingdom wherein every man may get his share of what he earns and we shall have an organization of society wherein dwelleth righteousness. And this will come about because we get the kingdom of God into first place in our collective and individual lives. When we do there will come to us that added factor, which we can never generate ourselves, that power from without and above, that force that lifts men and society from the fulcrum of eternity—"his righteousness." Humanity can never lift itself by its bootstraps. "There is in human nature no innate tendency whatever to progress," wrote one of the greatest of modern social philosophers. Life has but *one* center that will be a radius of every good thing. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

V

THE FOUNTAINS OF FAITH

As the marsh hen secretly builds on the watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of
God;

I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh hen
flies

In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the
marsh and the skies:

By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the
sod,

I will heartily lay me a-hold on the greatness of
God:

O, like to the greatness of God is the greatness
within

The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of
Glynn.

—*Sidney Lanier.*

When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith
on the earth?—*Jesus.*

Lk 18

V

THE FOUNTAINS OF FAITH

THERE are always men to tell us that the former days were better, and that when the Son of man cometh it is doubtful whether he will find any faith on the earth. Some throats are so shaped that their natural note is a croak, and some hearts seem born under a shadow. There is the much-worked shipwreck theory of human life. The world is a wreck, and the line has been stretched to save a few souls from the surf. Let the old wreck go; it is doomed anyway. Only the millennium with its new ship will avail for the world in which the gospel of the crucified Son of God has tried in vain to secure a foundation for his kingdom.

There is a class of college wise men and magazine sages who tell us in terms most dogmatic that the church is decadent, ceremony powerless, and the old gospel helpless in the surging sea of life. Faith is

losing its hold on the hearts of men, we are told, and something else must take its place. People no longer go to church, the church no longer dominates the religious ideals of mankind, and neglect of once honored customs is cited as evidence of the decay of the hold of religion on the lives of men.

It is a gloomy picture for the man who feels that, somehow, God is still in his world and has not quite turned it loose to wreck itself on the shore of human experience. The flat earth, once the bulwark of faith, is gone. The six twenty-four-hour days of creation are gone. Fiat creation is gone. Verbal inspiration is no more. Science with its inexorable gravitation and survival has come in and upset it all, and faith will soon be no more.

What the pessimistic brother misses is this: there are silent eternal springs from which flow the streams of faith into human life. Outward forms may perish, theories rise and fall, but the stream of faith flows on with gathering volume through all the ages. The rising waters of God steadily climb till they sooner or later break their

man-made banks, and when the levee crumbles there are always some standing by to cry that the river is gone.

The fountains of faith furnish the great reservoir of reserve that crops out in streamlets here and there in individual lives. The form of the rivulet may vary with the character of the soil and contour of the country, but the stream is ever the same; it is essentially faith in God. People are like monastery gardens—best within; and to the inner fountains must the appeal be made that is to meet with a response that may make the life to blossom and bear fruit. Once we learn that the tearing away of the old form is not the destruction of the inner life, we shall go forward with steadiness like unto the expanding life within. What are some of the inner fountains of faith?

There is *childhood*. God has always poured into life a stream of worship through the hearts and faces of little children. Where in all the earth is a more perfect reflection of heaven's spirit than in the face of a child? Where is written any more perfect picture of perfect peace than in the

face of a baby asleep? Through these reflections of God flows the spiritual impulse into hard hearts, calloused lives, and careless minds. Pitiful those homes denied the moral uplift of childhood. Worse than pitiful those where childhood has been purposely refused an entrance. Many a careless girl has received her first deep spiritual impulse when she has looked down into the face of her own first-born child. So long as the little child is in the midst the kingdom of heaven will never be so very far away. And while there are children in the homes faith will not perish from off the earth. It was no accident of speech that Jesus used when he set the child in the midst and said, "Of such is the kingdom."

This fountain opened in childhood and motherhood becomes a surging stream later on in the turbulence of adolescence. Here the misanthropes find one of their chief causes for complaint. "Young people are not religious"; at least, young people are not religious like their grandfathers are religious. If grandfather's memory is good, and he tells what he remembers, it may

appear that grandfather's spiritual advisers bemoaned the fact that he was not religious as were his elders and betters of two generations ago. Likewise, when grandfather's elders were young they were reproved for their lack of religious fervor, and so on *in finitum*. What our friends, the artists of despair, fail to comprehend is this: adolescence is a very religious time of life. What goes on in the heart of a boy or a girl and what come forth in word and act may be two very different things. Consistency is no part of youth, and is none too prevalent in maturity. "What do you think?" exclaimed an old lady. "Mary joined the church yesterday, and to-day I saw her skipping rope!" Horrors! But the rest of us are not much better when we expect a young man or young woman to exhibit a daily life in strict accord with such professions as come to the surface of adolescent religious expression. The highest ideals of religious devotion to service may be expressed at a rally of young people, and the following week show aberrations of conduct that take the breath away from the elders. Not that there need be out-

breaking of gross type, but there will be a rawness of thought and eccentricity of conduct at seeming variance with the professions of the public meeting.

These variations from normal are not to be taken too seriously. Perhaps when their elders acquire perfect consistency they may with impunity reprove the young folks for their folly, but in the meantime modesty may well befit us. The great fact is, that just this volatile, impressionable spirit affords one of the surest grounds for belief that faith will not perish from the earth. Where there is variation and upheaval, there is room for change and response to the call of the Spirit. All but a negligible number of preachers and missionaries and Christian workers heard and answered the call to service during this same period of storm and stress. Just when matters are worst with the youngsters they are best; and if the supply of candidates for the ministry is running low, the remedy is easy to find: go after them before their life direction is fixed. The trouble with the Student Volunteer movement and all other college agencies for securing Christian work-

ers is that the beginning is made two or three years too late. The high-school age is the time at which ideals are born and directions fixed. So long as there are young hearts vibrating with new life and responding to the new spiritual stimuli, faith will not perish from the earth.

There is a fertile stream flowing into life through the dispensations of *Providence*. A thousand innumerable, cumulative influences work together to bring home to the hearts of men the realities of the unseen spiritual universe about us. The word spoken in season, the cry of the hungry heart, the falling tear of the penitent, the overheard prayer of a mother's devotion, the chance clipping, the remembered text, the sermon, the song, the sorrow, the deliverance, the melting power of human love—these all work together to arouse in the human breast the feeling that God is somewhere close by, and that he is taking a hand in affairs in his world. These minor influences that make for goodness are not hailstones of divine power; they are, rather, the grateful dew falling on parched hearts and barren lives. It is but natural that

some flowers should be made to bloom where before lay the desert. While God is in his world, dealing every hour with people, faith will not perish from off the earth.

What, then, shall the church do? The old order changeth, the old forms fall away. The class meeting is not what it used to be. The things that our fathers did our children neglect or refuse to do. When the form crystallizes, cracks, breaks away, what shall we do? That is the vital question to every leader. Shall we try to renew emphasis on the outward form? Shall we try to bind together the broken parts with chains of command and bolts of law? If we do, the last state will be worse than the first. What shall we do?

This is what we must do: develop the fountains. Forget for the moment the form and cultivate the life of the Spirit. Create and stimulate an atmosphere that makes men think of God, and want to become like him. Generate spiritual life in the hearts of people by getting them close to Jesus Christ. How shall we do this? By method? By rules? By sending for some specialist? By agonizing in prayer?

Perhaps some of these may help, but they will help only in so far as they help to open the fountains and make them flow in more unobstructed blessing to thirsty hearts. There are some apparently slow people who have the faculty of opening the fountains of faith. Wherever they go people begin to get thirsty for the water of life. Mothers talk with them and then look into the faces of babies and lift their hearts in prayer. Friends come to know them and find a new reverence growing up unconsciously in their hearts. Strong men meet them and feel that somehow, after all, God is not far away, and that if they will look about, they may perchance find him for themselves. Every follower of Jesus Christ ought unconsciously to carry about with him something that will give men's hearts a little lift upward. When the fountains are open and the water is flowing there will not be much trouble about the desert. The oasis may even shift a little—such things have been known through the years—but it will grow and bear fruit.

Our business is to take care of the souls as they come. The church's high privilege

is to gather the crop that grows beside the river of the water of life. Delegating it to some one else won't do the work. That is our high privilege. No specialist can do your work or mine.

Jesus told a story one day about a widow who had a just case before a judge who cared nothing for the ethics of the case, but who, after a while, got tired of her everlasting importunity and gave her judgment to get rid of her. If that woman before an unjust judge showed such persistence, what manner of faith should the church show before the mercy seat of a just and loving God who waits to be gracious? It is that sort of persistent and never-let-go faith that generates a spiritual atmosphere in which the fountains of faith are opened and the streams of religious life begin to flow. Will the Son of man find faith on the earth? Yea, verily,

VI

THE PROBLEMS OF THE NEW YEAR

Every day is a fresh beginning,
Every morn is the world made new;
You who are weary of sorrow and sinning,
Here is a beautiful hope for you—
A hope for me and a hope for you.

Yesterday is a part of forever,
Bound up in a sheaf which God holds tight;
With glad days, and sad days, and bad days, which
never
Shall visit us more with their bloom and their
blight,
Their fullness of sunshine or sorrowful night.

Every day is a fresh beginning;
Listen, my soul, to the glad refrain,
And, spite of all sorrow and old sinning,
And puzzle forecasted, and possible pain,
Take heart with the day and begin again.

—*Susan Coolidge.*

Behold, I make all things new,—*Jesus,*

Rew 21⁵

VI

THE PROBLEMS OF THE NEW YEAR

THE problems of the New Year are personal—always. Its relations may be social, political, industrial, or philosophical, but its problems are personal. The end of the old and the beginning of the new bring us squarely up to the real issues of life. Face them we must, or they will defeat us in the struggle.

We shall need many things during the year—food, clothes, shelter, fellowship, work, and play; but back of all these lies the deepest need of our lives, the need of God. How does it stand between you and God just now? That is the problem of the New Year. You begin it bravely, but can you carry it through alone?

Some of us have a little money, some a very little, some none. It really doesn't matter. We are less and less interested in how much a man has, and more and more asking how he got it and what he is doing

with it. And not very long hence we shall stand naked souls before our records, and what we have won and spent will count for nothing then. Everything will fade before one supreme question, "How does it stand between you and God?" "This is an old question," you say? Not at all. How long has it been since anyone said to you, "Is God in your life?" This New Year, with its great problem, is entirely new. It never came this way before and you will never face again the inner challenge of this question you are hearing now.

The New Year brings a new chance for discouraged, run-down people. Most of us accumulate blunders enough, sins enough to sink us if there be no new chance. Our only hope is in a new chance. And God meets every man on the threshold of the New Year, offering to make all things new.

We are fond of deluding ourselves. We say, "O, well, perhaps we will do better next time"; but how can we do better if we have no new forces with which to work? Here is one of the chief delusions of life: that things are better somewhere else. Almost anything is better if only it is away

off somewhere. The work is easier, the climate is better, the people are more friendly somewhere else. The other fellow always has a better job than mine. Did you ever travel on the ocean and notice how beautiful the ship that comes to you across the waves? Its sides shine with paint, its prow cuts the waves so grandly, its decks are so clean and trim! But the boat beneath your feet—how dirty and commonplace and ill-smelling! And the man on the other ship looks longingly at you and envies you your palatial craft!

Here is the trouble. The monotony of life is not in the ship, nor the job, nor your friends, nor in the locality, but in *you*! Life grows old and stale and dreary because there is no God in it! It is not strange that life grows old when the heart decays. How could it be otherwise? There is a vast unseen misery in the dissatisfied hearts of men who have no God within. The untold ache in the hungry, empty hearts frets and complains of the ill-adjusted world without.

Now the world needs adjusting, badly enough, but it will be adjusted through you

first. The city needs cleaning up, but when enough people get right within it won't take long to make your town better. Some people are always looking for a better job. Others are trying to do better work where they now are. And the law of jobs is that the man who has a poor place and overfills it will get a better place much sooner than a man with no place at all can get even a poor place.

Most of us are trying to dodge our consciences and get away from God. You can't do it. You can't get away from the sky. Wherever you go the zenith is right overhead. In the dome of a certain church was painted the All-Seeing Eye, and it followed the worshiper whither he went. Shakespeare makes Henry V say that men may flee from human justice and escape punishment of men, "But they have no wings to fly from God."

God's New-Year offer to you goes to the heart of the problem of life. He proposes to come into your life and renew it at the fountain. When he does that old things will pass away and all things become new. Every man and woman who has con-

tributed largely to the world's uplift has been remade at the center. Lady Somerset struggled in the gloom of an unsatisfied life until she cried out for the living God, and there came to her something like a voice which said, "Act as if I were and you shall know that I am," and in a transformed life, she gave herself to the uplift of the downcast.

When once the universe within a man's heart is made new the renewing of the world outside is natural enough. The rose is sweeter, the sunset is brighter, the heavens more glorious, all nature in rapturous chorus of course. But it goes deeper than that. When a man has God in his heart the world and all that is therein fall into new relations and exhibit new values. Travel benefits only those who have eyes to see and souls to sense the deeper currents that throb and flow beneath the surface of things. I stood by the gangplank of a steamer in the harbor of Yokohama and overheard two travelers talking. Said one, "Are you going ashore?" "I guess so," said the other; "I want to get a bamboo cane and a drink of whisky," and this on

the spot where Commodore Perry opened the gates of the sunrise! If God is in the heart, you stand by Fujiyama, or the ruins of the Coliseum, or in the crowded streets of Canton and catch the indefinable rhythm of the pulse of God's own humanity beating out through the ages the fever of human experience, and slowly surging its way to life and health. But you don't get that if there is no God in your heart.

When God is in the heart there is a new interest in your work. It's worth doing, and doing well, because your Helper is interested and helping. When God is in your life you will have a new interest in people—not your little circle of friends, not the folks that have large common interests with you, not your own kin, or countrymen, but people—all people, any people, every people everywhere. They are all men of like passions as you, and children of one common God, and every one of them has something that will broaden and deepen your life a little if you will let it in. But without God you won't care much about folks.

Perhaps the biggest thing that comes in

with God's New-Year offer is a new efficiency. When at last you feel that you are doing something worth while, and doing it in a way that is worth doing, you will know for the first time the inner inspiration that comes from achieving a measure of efficiency. You are part of a great system, you are under orders from the Great Superintendent, you have your place; if you fail, others will be hindered and the work will suffer. And real efficiency—what is it? It is doing the biggest thing in the best way. We talk about, preach about, potter about everything except the real things. And only the real things are worth doing. The others will soon be "one with Nineveh and Tyre." But he that doeth the will of God shall be doing still better work when the old world shall have been whirled away with the dust of the universe outworn.

"Is God in your life?" That is the one question for the New Year. A drunken bum was recreated one night in the Water Street Mission. Amazed and sobered, he went out, and as he went he looked up and saw the stars shining down upon his bat-

tered life. "That was the first time I had looked up for ten years," he said. If you would become a new creature for the New Year, look up and let God in.

VII

“MY FATHER’S BUSINESS”

Is life worth living? Yes, so long
As there is wrong to right,
Wail of the weak against the strong,
Or tyranny to fight;
Long as there lingers gloom to chase,
Or streaming tear to dry,
One kindred woe, one sorrowing face,
That smiles as we draw nigh;
Long as a tale of anguish swells
The heart and lids grow wet,
And at the sound of Christmas bells
We pardon and forget;
So long as Faith with Freedom reigns
And loyal Hope survives,
And gracious Charity remains
To leaven lowly lives;
While there is one untrodden tract
For Intellect of Will,
And men are free to think and act,
Life is worth living still.

— Alfred Austin.

Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s
business?—*Jesus.*

VII

“MY FATHER’S BUSINESS”

It is a great day in the life of a youth when he discovers that he has some business to be about. Most biographies of effective living begin from that point. What goes before is but names and dates. The call to the Father’s business may come in the flash of light or in the still small voice. It may come at morning, or at midnight, but no one has yet done any notable thing in life without the consciousness that God laid his hand upon him for something.

It is a matter of statistics that the call to be about the Father’s business usually comes early if it comes at all. Twelve years are not many, but many a boy has known at that age that God wanted him. You can never tell what goes on in the secret thought of a boy of twelve. With Jesus, this incident in the temple at twelve indicates not precocity but capacity.

Somewhere all about us now are the future leaders of life. Some of them are dreaming their dreams and fighting their battles, torn by tumult within, and often acting quite outrageously without. No X-Ray has yet been discovered that will reveal the inner heart of a boy. Nor has any rule yet been discovered for regulating his conduct, but somewhere within is the ear that hears the voice and conceives of life as in some way related to the Father's business.

How early may a child see the vision and hear the call? Probably earlier than most of us think. Children are largely ears and eyes and the vision is usually then or never. Samuel was but a boy when God called him in the temple. David was a lad with the sheep—too young to summon for the prophet's inspection. Daniel was much too young for wisdom—in the eyes of his elders. What we need just now is a new emphasis on the truth that God does call young people to his service, and that he calls them early in life. We make a mistake in expecting the college age to settle the life direction of men and women who have already passed

the period of greatest sensitiveness to the needs of the Father’s business. What we need is a Student Volunteer movement in the high schools that will include in its scope all forms of Christian service. Where this has been organized and the plea made, the response has astonished those who thought that the young folks should wait until they were older before thinking of the ministry or the mission field as the Father’s business.

It is a familiar but curious thing that the visions of youth are nearly always incomprehensible to parents. Strange actions of inconsistent young people are always viewed “sorrowing.” In indignant amazement did the parents of Jesus view their boy in the temple busying himself with matters much too high for him, in their estimation. The fact is that we have short memories. So had Joseph and Mary. We have but to go back, slowly and painfully though it be, over the pathway till we come to our own lives at twelve years to realize that what we regard with alarm is but the record of our own conduct rewritten in our children.

Parental mistakes are often worse than childish aberrations. There is an unpardonable sin of parents. It is the discouraging of the spiritual aspirations of children. Who are we to veto the voice of God calling to our children for their hearts and service? What pastor has not again and again known children ready definitely and publicly to begin a Christian life, only to find that impulse forbidden at home—the child was “too young”? And when he was older the impulse was gone and the ruin accomplished. There are people who seem to live in dread that their children may become somewhat religious, as if that were a deformity or a handicap in the business of life. Some foreigners try to keep their children out of our public schools, fearing they will become Americanized and estranged from their kindred. And there is reason enough for such fear in the hearts of people whose lives are such that if their children should really become religious there would be a great gulf of difference between them and their parents. One terrible fact stands out in experience. To stifle the voice of the Spirit in the heart

of a child is to bring down terrible and usually incurable consequences upon both parents and children. Who among us has not heard the voice of a mother weeping for her son that had once wanted to “join the church,” but, being forbidden, had wandered away into the far country and was now away from his father’s house?

One of the hardest tasks that ever come to parents is that of recognizing in the son and daughter, not children, but a man and a woman come to live in the house. Adolescence is as hard for parents as for children. It is harder than toil and sacrifice and sleepless nights. It is the strain of an entirely new relation wherein the parent must lay down his position, assumed until it has become second nature, and become, not the ruler of a monarchy, but a citizen of a small democracy made up of some very raw and inexperienced young people who are quite sure that they know vastly more than their parents. And being without experience by which to check up their theories, they naturally are inclined to be impatient with the slowness of heart to believe on the part of their elders.

There are many ways of looking at life, none of them higher than as the Father's business. This was the whole mission of Jesus upon earth—to do the will of Him who sent him. All life was just that, or it was nothing to him. No man can enter into the higher and holier relations of life until it becomes to him his Father's business. Ruling motives and commonest details are all alike a part of that program.

Has every man a divine mission? So we claim and teach, and so much have we insisted upon this that we have nearly lost sight of the once honored teaching that God for special service lays his hand on some men and sends them to definite appointments in his work in the world. If every man has a call of God, how shall he know it? How shall the youth regard his vision of the Father's business? Follow it, cherish it, obey it, listen to it. Life has no greater problem than this: "What is the Father's business for me?" And whether the answer comes through providential openings or by the direct voice of the Spirit, it is the same question—what is the Father's business?

There is a stirring note of urgency in the words of the boy Jesus. That note is in all conquering lives. The Father’s business is too big, too urgent to allow any waste of time on small matters. The time is short; drop all side issues, needless excrescences, and do this one thing now. Efficient living depends much upon getting directly and forcefully at the thing for which life exists. Do it now.

Great souls, intent upon great tasks, are usually misunderstood by people to whom life is easy-going and to be taken moderately. Dead-in-earnestness is incomprehensible to some people, who seem to be incapable of getting down to reality in their attack on life. Some one must pay the price. Some one must be dead in earnest. Some one must be emptied of self and self-advantage in order to be filled with the Spirit. Some hearts must be broken, some lives must be lost. Some graves must be dug on foreign shores, some separations must be made. Some One had to die on the cross. Somewhere there must be dead earnestness that stops at nothing. The King’s business requires haste, and the

Father's business excludes every other business for him who answers the call.

The church to-day is facing one of the crises in its history. There have been times of greater opposition; there has never been a time of greater competition. Never have there been so many doors open up and down the street at the hour of service, calling men and children to turn aside and enter places of amusement and business and sin. If the church is to do its work, it must be about its Father's business with a dead earnestness that will stop at nothing that will save some. If ritualism will do the Father's business, then use the prayer book. If institutional means will do it, open the agencies of ministry. If social service will do it, then develop the social spirit of human service. If uniforms and brass bands will do the work, then let us have them. If moving pictures and church "shows" will reach people, then let us reach them. But this is not an age for holding to something that has worked well in the past merely for that reason.

What we must do is to drop our own conveniences and preferences and go after

people wherever they are. The church’s mission—the Father’s business—is not primarily to feed or entertain or please people. We are here to minister to the deepest, highest needs of the human heart. It is not a question of what we like or don’t like, but of what will bring men close to God. That is our Father’s business. To find the secret spring of the heart, to open the doors long closed, to lead the children into the kingdom of God, to bring the world to the foot of the cross of Christ, that is the Father’s business. Blessed is he who is filled with the insistent, all-devouring impulse to be about that business while it is called the day, for he shall live the efficient life.

VIII

THE COMMONPLACE

Ask the laborers in the field, at the forge, or in the mine; and none of these, who is a true workman, will ever tell you that he has found the law of heaven an unkind one—that in the sweat of his face he should eat bread. The wealth of a nation may be estimated by the number of happy souls that are employed in making useful things.—*John Ruskin.*

For you see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are.—*Paul.*

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VIII

THE GOSPEL OF THE COMMONPLACE

EVIDENTLY, God does not care much for men of genius, for there are few of them in any generation. Likewise, "he must have a great deal of use for common people," there are so many of us. Shakespeares and Lincolns and Burnses and Brownings and Edisons are rare, but the men in the street are an innumerable multitude, and to them has been committed the world's work. Literature, art, and education have been dominated by the occasional genius, until our students are led to suppose that it is no use for any one less endowed than Patrick Henry, Washington, or Gladstone to try to do very much toward making life worth while.

Now, the fact is, that not only are there very few men of transcendent ability, but that these overtowering men are not the

men who do the most useful work. They do a few things that the rest of us cannot do, but the many things are done vastly better by the multitude than by the Sauls and Solomons and Samsons. The work of the world is to be done by common men if it be done at all, and two-talent men can do work that ten-talent men will make a mess of. "You see *your* calling, brethren," you belong to the common kind; you are the people God is looking for.

It is hard to get away from our worship of the spectacular. The world hunts for great organizers of production, great captains of industry, star preachers. Are politics bad? Where is some Moses to lead us out of the wilderness of graft? Is the church weak and making little headway? Seek for some great preacher who will "draw." Send for some evangelist, who by physical contortions or bad language, or some other thing that any man with common ability would not think of using, and all will be well. Any man and any cult may get a following, if only there be enough of the spectacular to jar us out of our monotony. We love anything that makes us

feel something. As in the days of John the Baptist, we still seek for a sign—and miss the point.

God has always used common men to do his uncommon work. If he did not, most of us would have little chance for a place in the ranks. Jesus glorified the commonplace. The beatitudes are all exaltations of the common virtues of life. The poor, the meek, the hungry, the peaceable, the sorrowing, the persecuted—who are these but they who are all about us and who have little recognition at the hands of the world? It is the glory of the gospel that no new and startling virtues and qualities of character are brought to the fore, but that the everyday virtues are exalted and illuminated and given a divine quality that transforms the details of daily life into factors of the kingdom of heaven. The dust in the sunset becomes molten glory in the sky. The fog in the rainbow becomes a spangled spatter of colors. Brother Lawrence, scrubbing pots in the kitchen of his monastery, finds that God is in everything about him and sings his song of the glory of the commonplace.

Jesus has taught us to re-appraise the blessings of the common life. Daily bread, light, air, work, friends, shelter—these are the measure of daily experience, and, once exalted by the word of Jesus, they become the measure of daily joy and thanksgiving and duty and help. Just to be alive is a blessing rarely appreciated until it is too late. To merely keep well is a greater blessing than to be healed when sick. To find daily bread in the toil of life is a greater benefit than to be fed with manna from heaven. To make and keep the friendships of our toil and pleasure is greater than to find some new acquaintance among a different order of beings.

It is the common and countless experiences of life that form our permanent habits and final beliefs. Character and faith come from the unrecognized thousands of contributions from the words and acts and thoughts that are forgotten in the rush of the day's experience. We credit conversion or consecration to the last act that precipitated the climax. That is a mistake. The final surrender of the will and dedication of a life is the result of a

thousand things that went before and were forgotten.

The common things are the most difficult of achievement in any continuous and cumulative way. There are people who are ready for the great occasion, the high-sounding rally, or the whirlwind campaign, who are not present when the roll is called for the grind of daily duty. Yet it is the steady pull that gets the load to the top of the hill and the steady work of the common man that brings in the kingdom. In the end the great results will not come from the big receptions and jubilees and movements and demonstrations, but from the day upon day and week after week and year following year of the ordinary people who keep everlastingly at it.

Nowhere are we more fond of deceiving ourselves than in our search for God. God is so great that surely he must be found in the big things—the thunderstorm, the earthquake, the tempest of wind. How could the Almighty speak in so common a thing as a whisper? We pray for a down-pouring, an outbreaking, a Pentecost, a manifestation, and even while we clamor

the still small voice is speaking in our ears the message that we miss. One man of the New Testament was converted by the blinding flash and the voice from heaven at midday in the Damascus road. A thousand others came by the ordinary methods of conviction and conversion, and we have been so obsessed by the idea of a spectacular conversion that we have hardly admitted the validity of the call of men by other means. We cling to the vast union tabernacle meeting with its crowds and its enthusiasm, but after the smoke has cleared away the permanent results are mainly the effect of the quiet, steady work that has gone on through the years. If you want to find the living God, don't run off after the occasional shouter, but go to your own church, attend the prayer meeting, and find there Him whom your soul has sought in vain because you were looking in the wrong place. If you sincerely desire a work of grace in the church, let every official member, and all the others too, come to the prayer meeting and the Sunday school and the Sunday evening service, and the results will outstrip those attained by the

whirlwind method. Go to your own church, enter into your own closet and find God in the ordinary means of grace. Come to the regular Sunday service, praying for, looking for, expecting a work of grace, and see whether, after all, God is not "nearer to you than breathing, closer than hands or feet."

When difficulties or questionings arise in our hearts we are prone to seek for some aid, the more plausible the better. If the ship of our faith strands on the bar of doubt or difficulty we cast about us to see whether we cannot summon some strong tug to the rescue. What a relief to find some cable strong enough to tow us out into deep water again! And usually no tug appears, and while we watch and pray, lo, the tides of God's commonplace blessings and providences flow in and ere we know it we are afloat again and out where the tides flow free. There is a constant inflow of grace and blessing that comes through the common mercies of every day, and the total of helps coming that way surpasses the volume of blessing sent by special and spectacular means into our lives. We miss the snort

and smoke of the tug—it looks and sounds like something important and powerful—but God prefers to do most of his salvage by the uplifting power of the common winds and tides.

There are lots of unsatisfied people who would begin to grow in grace if they would stop looking and waiting for the unusual and special thing. To wash in Jordan has never been a popular way of being made whole, but for reasons of his own God heals most folks that way. To go and do some great thing is easy, far easier than to get down to business in the regular work of the church and kingdom, but it's not very often the way that God does.

The greatest miracle of earth is the calling of common men to uncommon tasks and the equipment of these same men so that they are equal to their call. It is the common men that stand before the altars of the church, that carry on its work, that pay its bills, that train its youth, that win its converts, that evangelize its heathen, that vote its reform tickets, that send up the incense of prayer to heaven for spiritual power.

It must be, after all, that when men stand before God they are all common, very common indeed. Three times are we equal—in the cradle, in the casket, and when we kneel at the altar of the Lord. The differences are on our side, not on his. What counts is this: willingness to receive and follow the Spirit. And “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble” are willing. Wherefore, “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and the things which are not, to bring to nought the things that are.”

IX

“LOVEST THOU ME?”

Men may die without opinions and yet be carried into Abram's bosom; but if we be without love, what will knowledge avail? I will not quarrel with you about opinions. Only see that your heart be right with God. I am sick of opinions. Give me good and substantial religion, a humble gentle love of God and man.—*John Wesley.*

The hour is coming when this our holy church
Shall melt away in ever-widening walls,
And be for all mankind; and in its place
A mightier church shall come, whose covenant word
Shall be the deeds of love. Not “Credo” then,
“Amo” shall be the password through its gates;
Man shall not ask his brother any more,
“Believest thou?” but “Lovest thou?” till all
Shall answer at God's altar, “Lord, I love!”
For faith may anchor, hope may steer, but Love,
Great Love alone, is Captain of the soul.

—*Liber Amoris.*

Lovest thou me?—*Jesus.*

In 21 15-17

IX

“LOVEST THOU ME?”

PETER'S case was peculiar. He had boasted, struck in haste, become confused, denied his Lord, forsook him, fled and gone fishing. The next morning, after a night of fruitless toil, Jesus had appeared on the shore and prepared breakfast with his own scarred hands. What must have been the thoughts in Peter's heart as he sat on the ground by the lake and ate the broiled fish that morning! Did he look at Jesus? How could he help it, and yet how could he look into the face of him whom he had denied? But Jesus must have looked at Peter. And Peter, penitent and eager to make new declaration of his faith, must have felt his heart swelling within his breast, till he could hardly eat the fish, and the hot tears must have come to his eyes as he remembered all those things that had come to pass.

When the meal was finished Jesus had a

few questions to ask of Peter. He might have inquired why Peter fell in that hour of testing, but there was not a word about that. Jesus knew how sore was the heart that had deserted him. Most of us would have wanted to know whether Peter could be depended upon to do better next time, but Jesus knew that it would take something stronger than impulsive declarations to keep Peter from falling. Jesus had something deeper to set before Peter.

In a few weeks Peter was to become the fearless and convincing preacher of Pentecost. Jesus would probe to the quick and examine him as to his qualifications. Few candidates have been examined as Peter was that morning. Perhaps there may be a lesson here for the committees before which come candidates for license to preach. Peter was not a hopeful candidate. His case was quite unusual. So was his examination.

The first question was clear and direct, and Peter must have staggered under its force. But his heart was full and his response came as readily as his avowal on the night of betrayal. "Simon, son of

Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?” asked the Master. “Yea, Lord,” replied the ready Peter. “Thou knowest that I love thee.” And Jesus said unto him, “Feed my lambs.”

Peter’s denial implied that he had lost faith in his Master; was he now convinced? After the doubt, the disappointment, the downfall, it needed no small courage to say boldly that he loved Jesus. Did Peter now believe enough to renew his vow and say without reservation that he loved his Lord? Was he now sure of his Master or waited he for further demonstration of the divine nature and mission of Jesus? Could he say without reservation that he loved him better than the others? Certainly, Peter’s reply left no doubt as to the thoroughness of his conviction. He was sure; he did love, and Peter meant that there should be no doubt about it.

To every man at some time the Master comes with the same question he put to Peter. And, verily, there is reason therefor. Who among us has not denied his Lord? Who has not in some emergency forsaken him and fled, or remained silent

in the judgment hall? And when we have crept away, silent and guilty, Jesus has followed us and found us and ministered to our needs; and then he has looked into our hearts and said, "Lovest thou me?" There is a divine wistfulness in this challenge of the Saviour to Peter and to us. Do we believe on him enough to say that we love him? Faith that does not ripen into love is not qualified to pass the test of this first question of Jesus. "If men knew him, they would love him," but if they do not know him well enough to say that they love him, how can they be counted among his disciples?

There was a test: "Feed my lambs." Peter's answer was not to end in mere words. He was to do something; so are we. There is need everywhere. Meet it in his name. If you believe, attest your faith by your works; there is room. If you love him, show it by helping to finish the work he began in the world. There are the hungry to be fed, the underpaid to be fought for, the undertaught and the underloved to be cared for. Unless you are helping somewhere in his work you have

no right to say to him, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.” Did Peter pass on the first question? Judging from his after life, we may believe that he did.

There was a second question. It had a familiar sound; its iteration of the first challenge startled Peter, which was what the Master intended. “Simon, son of Jonas,” rang the Master’s voice, “lovest thou me?” And Peter, with wakened heart, answered this time from a deeper consciousness of the meaning of what he said, “Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee.”

Why was the second question asked? Because the first one did not go deep enough. To arouse Peter’s avowal of his allegiance was not enough to satisfy Jesus. No examination based upon mere inquiry concerning a man’s convictions of truth goes far enough. Questions propounded at the altar of the church that probe no deeper than a man’s assent to the doctrine and discipline of the church do not go far enough. We may become unanswerable apologists for the truth, and we may be able to analyze and dissect and classify all the theological systems of the ages and at

the same time fail to pass this examination. We may even feed some lambs and do a lot of good work and still miss the heart of it. There are forms of lamb-feeding that are closely akin to picnicking and tea-drinking and do not get very far down into one's heart. A man may be perfectly satisfied with the integrity of his wife and be very empty of heart at the same time.

The second challenge of Jesus may be said to have been directed to a chamber of his being beyond that of his faith. Peter's heart was touched by this second appeal, and it is with the heart that men believe unto righteousness. It is rare that men ever come very close to God till their hearts are touched, and when they do come without the heart touch, as sometimes happens, there is always a cold formality about their religious lives that misses the tenderness of the heart devotion. Intellectualism is not spiritual until it first is touched by the fire from the altar of the heart. Much as we may protest and regret it, men are not largely controlled by their minds. Emotion is nearer the seat of the soul than reason. The springs of conduct take their

rise back near the heart. A new emotional impulse has more power over the lives of men than all the syllogisms ever invented. Kant was a master of logic, but Booth changed the lives of men through their hearts. Evangelists and campaign orators who move multitudes of men do it through their hearts. The second question of Jesus pierced through Peter's ready assent to a deeper spring of his life.

The second question had also a test: "Feed my sheep." If assent must be tested, heart impulses must also prove their depth and thoroughness, and the test of emotional impulse is likewise service. The difference between sentiment and wholesome emotional impulse has but one measure, and that is service. The falling tear has no redemptive significance unless it result in the changed life. Gratitude is certified by helpfulness. Loving must be proved by living. Fear is made to serve by warning some one else. Mercy, kindness, faithfulness, and sacrifice—these are the fruits of faith and love. Emotion which works itself into reform movements and new ethical standards may be considered to be

genuine enough for all practical purposes. Tears which produce impulses lasting no longer than the wet cheeks are failures as tests of our love for Jesus Christ. "Feed my sheep."

The third question must have come like a thunderbolt in Peter's ears. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" There was still a third chamber in Peter's heart, untouched by the first and the second questions, and into that innermost recess the third question penetrated. Simon was stirred this time as never before. It became no longer a matter of assent, nor even of devotion, but, with every fiber of his being roused, Peter made answer from his innermost *will*, and that was what Jesus wanted. No man was fit to become the preacher of Pentecost until the last inner impulse of his being was sounded and found to be in tune with his Master's will. Since Peter will have to reach the wills of men before they will arise and repent, it is essential that his own will be quickened and renewed. It takes more than reason and more than emotion to reach the man of the innermost circle. If Peter is to

preach so that three thousand men may be added to the church in one day, he must be able to do more than convince their understandings and arouse their sympathy. There are people who by nature are tender-hearted. Tell a pathetic story and they will weep, but not act. Present a bill for collection and they promise, but neglect payment. Go to them with an opportunity for Christian service and they show interest, but do nothing. A man when intoxicated may become very penitent, and agree tearfully to the good advice of his friend, but it takes more than that to effect a reform.

The third question did just what Jesus must have intended—it stirred Peter to action. In pained and startled amazement he arose and replied, and in that trembling reply Jesus found what he wanted. Peter must learn that preaching to be effective must lead to action. That is what is the matter with most of our preaching—nothing happens. Never shall we know whether we have really entered the Christian life until “our wills are lost in thine,” and bring us to act as Christians should. Never

shall we learn to know the secret of the Lord, never shall we be wholly satisfied in heart until there is perfect accord between our wills and his.

Once more there is a test. Yes, "Feed my sheep!" Why, that was the test before! Yes, it was, there is no other. The proof of conviction is service. The proof of devotion is service. And the proof of resolution is also service, fellow-service, if you will, but service. Are you a sheep-feeder? Is anyone drawing help from your life? Building great churches is not sheep-feeding. Employing great orators to come and deliver great addresses is not sheep-feeding. When your will is aroused to harmony with the will of God, then you will begin to do things that you never thought you could do. You will find ranges of service before all undreamed of, and life will be a different thing.

But what a question that is!—"Lovest thou me?" Why, that is the greatest question ever asked. Jesus gave Peter the greatest examination ever set before any human being. He sounded the central depth of all life motives. He tested Peter's

mind and Peter's heart and Peter's will, and that was about all there was of Peter.

That is the greatest question of all life, “Lovest thou me?” A homesick “citizen” of one of the George Junior Republics wrote a letter to his only living relative, a careless sister. “If you love me any, please answer this letter,” he pleaded. “But if I don't hear from you, I will know that you have no love left for your only brother.” And no letter came.

That is what the mother asks of the babe on her breast, long before the infant can know what it means; but she keeps on asking till the answer comes. The youth asks it of the maiden and the young husband asks it of the wife. Long years after it is still the same old question, waiting for the same old answer. In the evening hours of life it comes again, and the wrinkled old face puckers into a smile with the reply, “You know I do. What makes you ask me that again?” The answer is easy: “Because I like to hear you say it.”

It may have been long ago that Jesus came to you in your early knowledge of him and in some form said to you, “Lovest

thou me?" And you replied, "Yea, Lord; I am convinced. Thou knowest that I love thee," and he put you to work. But it may be that works ceased to satisfy an inner hunger that grew in your heart, and after a time Jesus came again with a more searching probe, and love was born again in your heart. You found a new and unexpected joy in his presence and service became sweet. Perhaps you found the "second blessing." Well, God pity the man who never found but one! As time went on you found that your devotion did not seem as deep as you thought; there were sacrifices that you had not made, and there were things that you wanted that crowded up against the door of your heart. And then Jesus came once more, and this time his question stirred you through and through, and, trembling before him, you surrendered all and cried, "Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." And again he said, "Feed my sheep." Go on with the work more efficiently than before. Make your consecration include the new-discovered unsundered things, and Pentecost will not be far away.

X

“HAVE FAITH IN GOD”

O why and whither? God knows all;
I only know that he is good,
And that whatever may befall,
Or here or there, must be the best that could.
For he is merciful and just;
And so by faith correcting sight,
I bow before his will and trust,
Howe'er they seem, he doest all things right.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

The world is wide,
In time and tide,
And God is guide;
Then do not hurry.
That man is blest
Who does his best
And leaves the rest;
Then do not worry.

—*Charles F. Deems.*

Have faith in God.—*Jesus.*

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X

“HAVE FAITH IN GOD”

THE disciples had met a mystery and were confused. Just why the fig tree should be withered away when it was yesterday green and growing they could not understand. Instead of explaining the process or expounding his purpose, Jesus said to them, “Have faith in God.”

There are some things beyond our present range. There are regions where the inductive method fails to bring light. There are problems for which no solution can yet be found. Before this class of difficulties Jesus said, “Have faith in God.” Like all great, simple rules, we are apt to miss the meaning of this teaching. It is a word great enough for little children, unto whom he likened the kingdom. And there is a place in every great life for the faith of a little child.

Jesus did not say “Have faith.” That were an unnecessary word. Men have

faith in something as universally as they have breath. Every man has some basis of thinking, some philosophy of living, unconscious though it be. Frequently unformulated, often unstated in any intelligible form, it is, nevertheless, the total result of the reactions of his personal experience with life.

Men must have faith in something or go mad. They must believe or perish. We have come to an age wherein we need a new emphasis on the truth that the living results of faith are measured by the nature of the object of our faith. We may have great faith in delusion, and end in despair. We may trust implicitly in a broken bridge, and go down to destruction. We may believe with all our might in the foundation of sand, but great will be our fall when the storm comes. Faith does not strengthen the sand foundation, nor repair the broken bridge, nor make true the illusion.

The emphasis of Jesus was not on the need of faith, but on the necessity of faith in God. This is the main issue, the crucial test of life. We may do a lot of good

things and leave undone a lot of bad things, but if we do not achieve faith in God we have missed the heart of life and we die at the core. There is a system of mental therapeutics, “neither Christian nor scientific,” which talks much of faith, but denies the existence of a personal God. As well believe that a man has no personal mother! And the results are as terrible as the means. While occasional “cures” have been wrought, where the ills were mainly imaginary or the result of some form of suggestion, the total of human suffering has been increased by the form of self-delusion which begins by denying the evidence of one’s own senses and ends in utter mental confusion. Proclaim it from every pulpit and housetop that Jesus commanded us to have faith in a personal God and not in the evaporated essence of attenuated “All-things.”

After all, facts are pretty good things to have about and maintain relations with, and one of the basic, outstanding facts of life is that of a personal God living in the world with us. We may work with him or against him, or we may try to work

without him, but we soon reach the limits of the things we can explain, and there stands the eternal challenge. For all beyond that portal have faith in God!

We have a national heritage of faith. The men who laid our foundations were men who had faith in God. Compare the Pilgrims upon the shores of New England with other pilgrims in ages past, and faith in God stands out as a distinguishing difference. Mistakes enough there were, but this much is incontrovertible; those foundations were laid by men who had a lively moral sense. Governor Winthrop and Roger Williams and Jonathan Edwards and Cotton Mather and George Washington were men who held onto Omnipotence when there was not much else to hold to. In the crisis of the Civil War Lincoln got down on his knees and promised God that from henceforth he would trust the Almighty arm, for the case had become too great for his own mastery.

A few years ago a metropolitan newspaper challenged the churches to show wherein they were doing any adequate work toward the improvement of the con-

ditions of American life, and ventured the assertion that the leaders of the nation who were doing most for its moral uplift were men without the membership of the churches. Whereupon a pastor in a pulpit in that city called upon the editor to make a list of the names of five of the great leaders who were doing most for the moral redemption of the country. The challenge was accepted, and the following five names enumerated: Roosevelt, Riis, Bryan, Folk, and Hughes—every one of them an energetic church member and militant Christian.

We have a surfeit of cure-alls and nostrums for the national ills of the age. Everything, from tariff revision to free postage stamps, is proposed as a remedy for all our troubles. The list of political quack schemes is endless, each warranted to cure if taken in sufficiently large doses.

Our trouble is deeper down. It is not details of administration nor items of technical procedure that afflict us as a people, but a lack of fundamental faith in God. The style of brick used in paving gutters is not so important as the style of character that sits in the office of street

superintendent. Given a sufficient moral reserve in the character of the great common people, and national problems can all be worked out to some satisfactory solution. But without faith in God we may go on tinkering with the scaffolding until the building falls.

There are plenty of problems. Militarism places faith in gunpowder and strategy, but the balance of power maintained by increasingly enormous armament is unstable equilibrium at best. In time of war we are very devout, especially if things are going against us. We need a faith in the God of peace who will teach us how to bring about peace on earth instead of the seething hell of war between men. We have thrown out grappling hooks to all sorts of modern theories, and some of them are breaking away. More will follow before we get our anchors down to the solid foundations of personal faith in the God of nations. 'Tis character, not battleships, we need.

Faith in God is like faith in man. It may be translated into short and simple words. Trust, obedience, confidence—these are faith. When one has faith in his father

and mother chance rumors do not disturb that confidence. In the same way believe in God. Let no idle criticism of the management of the universe disturb you. You believe in God. Keep on believing; there is no other foundation for confidence. If we cannot trust in the goodness and love and mercy and wisdom of God, we can have no faith in anything. If God be not in this world, then we can have no very urgent business here ourselves.

There is great relief for worry in increased confidence in the providence of God. The world is full of hard things, many of them with puzzle departments annexed. There is greed and there is graft and there is selfishness run riot. There is misfortune and sorrow and there are burdens and blunders. There is something wrong somewhere all the time. That was Job's trouble. Why do the righteous suffer? There is trouble in China and in the Balkan States. There is trouble in South America and in Africa and in Mexico. Right here in the United States there are strikes and lockouts and dynamiters and suffragettes. There are the high cost of

living and the doctor and the lawyer and funerals and bills and scarcity of work and—well, there is no end to the list. What shall we do? *Have faith in God!*

Suppose we turn the case about and discard our faith in God. Where are we now? Have we shortened our list of troubles one item? Have we bettered our condition in any respect? To whom now shall we go? If we let go of the living God there is in all the universe no foundation anywhere for the resting place of our question, and we find ourselves shipwrecked specks adrift on a boundless sea of disaster. "Sometimes I feel like letting go," complained a widow in her hour of bereavement. "But when you have let go of God, to whom will you then cling?"

It is the people who have let go of God who grope about for some substitute, and many and curious are the bits of wreckage to which they pin their hopes. Men who cannot accept the Christian's faith will believe in ghosts and the signs of the moon and will not begin an enterprise on Friday. Too absurd and incoherent to command the respect of sane thought are the vagaries of

a mind thrown out of balance by its separation from the universal foundation. The driveling of some ill-kept soothsayer by the wayside is accepted at par by the man who cannot give credence to the Gospels with their message of life.

“Show us the Father!” and we will believe. That is not hard to do. Here he is at work in the world. In every experience of life he comes helping, healing, comforting, reproving, forgiving, saving, loving. Through faith in God multitudes have come to know their sins forgiven, have faced the terrors of persecution and martyrdom, have fought with devils of the political ring and industrial monopoly, have conquered the hosts of evil, have penetrated continents, have evangelized cannibals, have sown the seeds of progress and hunger for knowledge in minds long closed to the light, have carried elections, have purified governments, have trained youth to noble effort and high sacrifice, have laid the foundations for the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Columbus had faith in God, and he went out not knowing whither he went and dis-

covered a new world. The old intrepid explorers were all men of faith. The pioneers were men of rugged but implicit confidence in God. By faith Newton saw the law of God in the falling apple, and by faith Morse sent a message by means of lightning and a wire. By faith Washington held onto the promises at Valley Forge, and Lincoln claimed a victory for the cause of freedom. And what of the men who harnessed steam, subdued lightning, chained the tides, built railways, irrigated deserts, explored the poles, made clean and wholesome the tropics, and discovered the secrets of man's marvelous body? Have not these too had a share in the promises?

What more shall we say? Time would fail us to tell of Saint Francis, of Fra Paola Sarpa, of Savonarola, of Wickliffe, of Wesley, of Calvin, of Whitefield, of Asbury, of Lee, of Peter Cartwright, of Freeborn Garretson and Phillips Brooks and Moody and Livingstone and Carey, and a mighty host of other conquering saints of the pulpit and mission field and laboratory and public office and shop and field. All these through faith wrought righteousness, subdued king-

doms, and helped to usher in a better day upon the earth.

Jesus did not explain the puzzle of the withered fig tree, but he did speak a word of emphasis that reaches the deepest need of our lives. The riddle explained would have been forgotten before the next mystery arose. But his rule for all the mysterious and inexplicable things in life still stands: “Have faith in God.”

“So on I go not knowing,
 I would not if I might;
 I would rather walk in the dark with God,
 Than go alone in the light.
 I would rather walk by faith with him,
 Than go alone by sight.”

XI

"IF ANY MAN THIRST"

If Jesus Christ is a man—
And only a man—I say
That of all mankind I cleave to him,
And to him I will cleave alway.

If Jesus Christ is a God—
And the only God—I swear
I will follow him through heaven and hell,
The earth and the sea and the air.

—*Richard Watson Gilder.*

Jesus, thou Joy of loving hearts!
Thou Fount of life, thou Light of men!
From the best bliss that earth imparts
We turn, unfilled, to thee again.

We taste thee, O thou Living Bread,
And long to feast upon thee still;
We drink of thee, the Fountain Head,
And thirst our souls from thee to fill.
—*Bernard of Clairvaux, translated by Ray Palmer.*

If any man thirst, let him come unto me and
drink.—*Jesus.*

XI

“IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM
COME UNTO ME AND DRINK”

FOR seven days the multitudes had gone to the Pool of Siloam and brought back their full vessels of water to be poured out in the temple as a libation before the Lord. On the last day, that great day of the feast, they came back with their vessels empty in testimony of the Coming One who should fill their empty hearts and fulfill their long-delayed hopes. On that day Jesus stood, and as he watched the faces of the thronging Jerusalemites he cried, “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink!” What a cry it must have been in the ears of that throng! He saw in those faces broken hearts, thwarted plans, disappointed hopes, fettered spirits, dulled senses, all the scarred monotony of meager living written on the faces of toilers. Dress that crowd in modern garments, pass it down the crowded thoroughfares of any modern city

to-day, study the faces, and they will differ not a whit from the faces we see there every day. If Jesus were here in the flesh to-day and stood by the corner and viewed the ordinary city sidewalk crowd, would he not again cry, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink"? Is he not at this very moment in this very place saying that very thing to us? If any man thirst, may he not now come and drink? No matter what a man's thirst may be, if it is a legitimate thirst of his life, Jesus can give him to drink.

There are three great needs of life that Jesus is able and ready to meet for us. The first is the supply of material things for our physical needs. We must have food, we must have shelter, we must have work. Surely, it is no accident that there are no famines in Christian lands! Nor is it a coincidence that all the money contributed for relief of human suffering comes from Christian countries and goes to lands that are less Christian, or not at all Christian. In Buddhistic and Confucian and Moham-medan countries men starve to death every year by the thousands, and occasionally by

the million, but that does not happen where the Spirit of Jesus has stimulated the spirit of men to develop and husband the resources of the earth. Somehow he has the secret of the supply of the physical necessities of life.

But the law goes deeper than this. We live in an age of tense industrial problems. Not military control, but industrial justice is the problem of our age. Production, distribution, wages, organization, capital, labor, control—these are the words with which we conjure to-day. And it is true that the problems growing up about these terms can be solved only in His way. Every other way only adds fresh complications. There is tremendous significance in the statement that in Christian lands production has ceased to be a problem. That will do for the African jungle—how to produce enough for all to be supplied; but is is not the concern of America. Our problem is this: how to divide what we have produced so that every man shall get his rightful share. We have plenty for everybody, but people go hungry because we have not yet learned from Jesus Christ

how to keep monopoly from robbing the people. We hunger and thirst for what belongs to us, but has been kept from us. If we come to him we shall find the remedy.

The world is very slow in coming to Jesus for bread. We are so afraid that the other fellow will get ahead of us that we are all afraid to submit our case to arbitration, and we are so afraid that we will not get ahead of the other fellow that we dare not submit our case to Jesus Christ. But there is no other place where we can find a remedy that will cure the fundamental cause of human want. To him we must come. Artificial, arbitrary plans will not work. Laws, methods, theories all help. but the deep-down remedy lies in a reconstructed humanity. We must have men enough who have been with Jesus and learned of him, and then we can set the world to rights. And from this physical basis we may rise to every need of our lives and be sure that if we will come to Jesus we need not thirst, but may drink freely.

The world needs leadership, the right kind of leadership, as much as it needs

bread and meat. Yes, greater is the need of the right kind of leaders than of food, for the right leaders will solve the provision problem. Every great religion springs from man's sense of his helplessness. We all grope in the dark till some strong hand is stretched down from above to guide us in the way. There is the constant confusion of the unknown path ahead, the eternal question, Who shall guide us through tomorrow? With a vast fraction of mankind continually within thirty days of the hunger line, who would not be willing to turn over to some all-wise and all-powerful leader the task of guidance of our lives?

The world is moving faster to-day than ever before, but toward what goal? “Japan is leading the Orient, but whither?” comes the warning from missionaries in the land of Nippon. In an age of stagnation and standstill leadership is unimportant, but in a time when all life is in flux and change leadership is of enormous consequence. No greater question confronts our own land than that of our leaders and the goal toward which they are leading us. Who shall lead us aright? Count Okuma said

that Buddhism is being rejected by the better classes of the Japanese, and that the people, "being spiritually thirsty, have nothing to drink."

Jesus Christ cannot lead the world except he be able to find men and women through whom he can enter into our life and exert a controlling influence. "He alone can lead it right, but he cannot do it alone"; and still he waits for those who will bring him into contact with life.

There is in each man a very deep need of individual leadership. Were you ever hungry for the touch of some strong hand? Did you ever long for some sure feet to mark the path? In the tangle of life have you ever prayed for a guide who knew the way? Listen: "I am the way." His feet have marked the path, his hands have pointed the way, his voice it was that said, "Come and drink." And no man can keep the way and find food and drink and leadership unless he first find Jesus Christ.

The third great need of our lives is that of fellowship. There is an inner thirst of heart, down inside of us, where every man is lonesome, that only Jesus can satisfy.

After we have shared as far as we can our last confidence with our closest friend there still remains the great inner secrets of our lives and the hunger for a confidant to whom we can go and with whom we can share the last terrible struggle of our inner selves. There is no thirst more burning than this, there is no need more tormenting, if it cannot be met. Can Jesus meet this need? Ask those who have found in him a fellowship that supplies the last, long, utterly satisfying drink from the flask of fellowship. Note the added power in their lives. One stalwart soul may, by grace of courage and vision and leadership, be equal to a thousand leaderless men, but two shall chase ten thousand! Geometrical and cumulative is the power of fellowship, and Jesus alone can quench that thirst in a living soul.

At the heart of life there are questions. When men begin to think they always begin to ask. Jesus is the answer to the questionings of the mind that is troubled by the problems of faith. Is it hard to believe? It is far harder not to believe. Are there difficulties with faith? They are

small beside the difficulties of no faith. Read Browning's "Bishop Blougram's Apology" and learn that the man who cuts loose the cable of faith is adrift upon a difficult and treacherous sea.

The questions of the heart are always deeper and more difficult than those of the head. The mind may demand causes without, but the heart must have satisfaction within. The body may feed on material food, and the mind on facts, but the heart can't be satisfied with things nor with ideas. Reason won't meet, logic won't satisfy, checks won't balance the interrogations of the heart. Every unsatisfied heart is in a state of search. The search may be unconscious, but it is real. There is, there must be, something just beyond the horizon that will meet this inner gnawing. We open the Bible, perhaps it is on the page. We come to church, perhaps the sermon or the song may contain the forgotten secret. We hasten for a new book, we study a new -ism, we hurry off to hear a new preacher, we join a new church—lo here! lo there! Surely, in some of these we shall find the elixir we seek. That

is why so many people are restless and dissatisfied and change about and never continue in one stay. Their hearts are hungry, that's the trouble. They don't know what is the matter with them, but that is it. And they have not heard the voice of Jesus say, "Come unto me and rest," or, if they have heard it, they have not heeded, which is much the same thing in the results.

Sherwood Eddy tells us that he climbed into missionary service over two barriers—the lure of the commercial career and the fascination of the city pulpit. And then he faced another fight. He was willing to turn his back on these things, to leave his country, his kindred, his career, to suffer whatever must needs be, but there was one thing that staggered him. He wanted to get results, and the idea of making the sacrifice and then spending his life with little or nothing to show for it, that was his cross. Years later he returned on furlough, and laughed over his early fears. He had left a petty province and found an empire. He had left a workman's job on a cabin, and become superintendent of a cathedral. Jesus Christ had supplied all

his needs, and far more than he could have asked or thought. And there is enough in the kingdom of Jesus and his plans on the earth to fill up the measure of the largest capacity that any man has ever brought to the fountain of life for satisfaction.

No matter what your need may be, he can supply it. Here is a challenge. Bring your needs to him, honestly, earnestly; either he can meet them or the whole system of Christian truth and life is a failure. And until a life is found which he is unable to satisfy, we may very safely respond to his invitation, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

XII

KINDNESS

That best portion of a good man's life—
His little unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.

—*William Wordsworth.*

True worth is in being, not seeming;
In doing, each day that goes by,
Some little good, not in dreaming
Of great things to do by and by.
For whatever men say in their blindness,
And spite of the fancies of youth,
There's nothing so kingly as kindness,
And nothing so royal as truth.

—*Alice Cary.*

A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion, or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken
And made a friend sincere.

Then deem it not an idle thing
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear, the thought you bring,
A heart may heal or break.

—*John Greenleaf Whittier.*

Add . . . to godliness, brotherly kindness. —*Peter.*

XII

KINDNESS

THE new command of Jesus was the most important social teaching the world has ever heard. Of rules and systems the world has had a plenty, but of personal forces commensurate with the demands of social uplift what shall we say? That the currents of life tend to flow inward and selfward we all admit. Who is able to make them flow outward and otherward?

Jesus alone has made love to God the climax of self-expression, and love to men like unto it. When we attain unto that degree of grace we may find our social viewpoint much altered.

Peter built an addition table of the Christian graces. He began with faith and ended with charity. Paul condensed the permanent qualities to three, and again the climax is charity. In Peter's thought brotherly kindness is higher than godliness and the last grace to be attained,

We may even be heavenly-minded and fail in brotherly kindness.)

Half of all the trouble in the world grows out of personal relations. If relations between people can be set right, we shall cure this half of all our grief and sweeten all the rest of life at the same time. Getting on with people—this is the problem of living in a world rather thickly inhabited and wherein we are all dependent one on the other for the very primal necessities of life. Some cannot get on with themselves, much less anyone else. Some are at so much peace with themselves that they cannot see that anyone else has claims to consideration. How much Christian work has failed of its end because of friction among the workers! How many ministers have moved on, how many missionaries have come home on furlough and failed to return to the field because of incompatible personal relations on the field! How much of our daily life gets sand in the bearings and drags along with grinding and loss of efficiency just because we cannot get along together smoothly! If we can find the key to peaceful and helpful living with people, we may

solve a considerable problem of the efficient life.

The solvent of this section of human troubles is the spirit of kindness—not kindness made up and assumed for the occasion, but kindness that is unconscious and natural and the free expression of the spirit within; kindness in little things, kindness that thoughtlessly is kind, not in the big and spectacular things, but in the small and unnoticed things of life. Wordsworth said something about “That best portion of a good man’s life, his little nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love.” This unconscious disposition that makes a man do what he does when he is not thinking about it is the fountain from which flows that best portion of a good man’s life. This it is that melts away troubles between people and smooths the rough path for weary feet.

We are slow to learn the law of the reactions of unkindness. In the great averages of life what we do is pretty sure to run ahead of us and face us somewhere along the road. When we hear said of us what we have said of others, there is a sudden

sting that hurts to the quick. When we find some one doing unto us the same underhanded turn that we have practiced on others it has a peculiar stab that cuts deep. The things that we have done unto others have a certain blistering power when others do them unto us. Unexpected and unannounced they rise up to meet us, and whither shall we flee from their avenging? Nowhere. They have us in their power, for they are the children of our own thought and deed. And the life that goes on sowing seeds of unkindness along its path will come to its harvest by and by. Old Scrooge was no creature of Dickens's fancy; he lives everywhere, and something of his experience and character is possible in most of us. At the end of a life that has, through unintentional slights, come to open and purposeful deeds of unbrotherliness there remains a sour, knotted, and blistered soul. To become a living embodiment of such a life were hell enough for this world.

There is certainly a projection of the lives that we live out beyond the years of our earthly pilgrimage. When the scrolls of eternity are unrolled there may come

back to us from the phonograph of God's unfailing remembrance every cutting word, every malicious act, every unkindness of the years reënforced with the momentum of the ages, and the soul may well enough be overwhelmed in bottomless billows of eternal woe and regret. That will be hell enough for eternity.

The reactions of kindness also come back to us, thank God! As surely as we send out personal gratitude and helpfulness and show consideration and charity unto those about us, we shall sooner or later meet the same things at the hands of others. There are no more refreshing experiences in all life than those due to the unexpected returns of the little deeds of kindness that we have done without thinking, and have forgotten even while we did them.

The reactions of kindness have a therapeutic value little recognized. There are few cases of overwrought nerves that can long withstand the constant doing of some acts of kindness toward people about. Most of our nerve strain is due not to overwork, but to ingrowing self-consciousness. What we need is to start the current

the other way, and nothing will do that so well as the practice of kindness. There are multitudes of people who are suffering acute congestion of self-interest. They revolve about their own interests till their lives narrow down to a point, and then they bore the point into a hole, and when the hole is finished it becomes a tomb. The currents of life must be outward, not inward, and the hardest thing about the treatment of these self-centered neurasthenics is their unwillingness to consider anyone else but themselves. Peace and balance are never attained upon so narrow a base as the personal interest of a single life.

Kindness has a direct relation to beauty, certainly a much more intimate relation than various artifices and blandishments sold and bought and applied with diligence by some misguided people with the purpose of attaining beauty—from the outside. If you would be truly beautiful, be kind. True beauty of soul and comeliness of face come through unselfish living. Did you ever remember that you have no homely friends? Well, you have none. And what

is it that makes friendship to grow among people? It is not clothes, in spite of the fixed belief on the part of many that fine raiment will increase one's circle of inner acquaintances. It is not "style," whatever that may be. It is not affectation of manner, it is not possession of much money, it is not an accent of the voice or a degree from the schools. This is it—kindness. If a man would have friends, he must himself be friendly, and other than this, no prescription has ever been found that will work. Nothing attracts like attractiveness; no one wins friends like a friend.

The world has need of kindness. It needs kindness more than it needs universities or libraries or tombstones. Coördinate with this is the further fact that there is in most of us some germ of the philanthropic instinct. Who would not be willing to found a great institution for the relief of humanity and the perpetuation of his own name? How we would give our days to plans and our nights to dreams of what we could do with a fortune! But for some strange reason, when the fortune comes, the philanthropic spirit oozes out. It really seems a

pity to give away all that money after you have it.

But here is a chance for the humblest of us to become a millionaire philanthropist and found a reputation that will live on in eternal fragrance in the hearts of men. We can become great dispensers of kindness. Jesus Christ had no money to give, he founded no institution himself. But everywhere he went the common people gathered about him and hung on his words; they loved him because he was so kind to them. You cannot give something that you do not possess, but you can give what you have, and the more kindness you give away the more you will have left. Be a millionaire philanthropist in kindness.

The world needs all the kindness we can give, God knows! The bravest faces cover heavy loads and the brightest smiles come from shadowed hearts. Were you never staggering along under a load that seemed about to crush you, when some little thing done by a friend put new heart into you and sent you on your way strong for the journey? Are you in trouble with some one who has wronged you? Try this; do him a

kindness and see what will happen. Ninety per cent of all the personal friction in the world can be permanently cured by kindness. Try it. What a good world it would be with all the unkindness weeded out of it!

There is a very real sense in which we may be kind to Jesus Christ. He is so closely identified with his people that he tells us that anything that we do for any of his children is done unto him. There was a monk, so the story goes, who vowed that he would never look upon the face of a fellow mortal until he had first seen the face of his Lord. And as he went hooded in the way he trod upon the helpless, he ran over a little child, he stumbled and fell—and he never saw the Master. And when we offend one of his little ones he tells us very plainly that he is grieved at heart. Whatsoever we do unto any of these, his children upon the earth, we do unto him. The next time you are impelled to do an unkind act to anyone stop and think that you are doing this thing to Jesus Christ. Will you complete the act?

Habit is the result of consciously doing a thing until we do it unconsciously. And

the law of it is that whatever we do consciously, even though it be only at intervals, we come to do unconsciously all the time. And the things that we do unconsciously we do with a vast saving of effort over the conscious acts of life. Sometimes we do them better because we follow habit. Conscious kindness so changes the subconscious self that kindness becomes the inner law of life, and we cannot act otherwise.

We never realize the true values of the things that we do while we are doing them. When we think that we are doing some great thing it usually falls flat. Heroes, inventors, discoverers have all done their greatest work when they were not aware of it at all. A great general was asked to describe his experiences in battle. After some thought he replied that they got up about five in the morning, had breakfast, sometimes; fought till noon, and then till night, and those who were left tried to get a little food and sleep for the next day's work—and that was all he could remember. When Washington crossed the Delaware he had no thought of the fame of his exploit. Lincoln had no thought of the blazing im-

mortality that would arise about his name. Real greatness is always unconscious. What, then, shall we do? Do this! Make a habit in your life never needlessly to wound anyone. Put yourself in the other fellow's place. Never lose a chance to do an act of kindness. And, above all, be affectionate and forgiving, one with another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you.

XIII

“THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED”

Endurance is the crowning quality,
And patience all the passion of great hearts;
These are their stay, and when the leaden world
Sets its hard face against their fateful thought,
And brute strength, like a scornful conqueror,
Clangs his huge mace down in the other scale,
The inspired soul but flings his patience in,
And slowly that outweighs the ponderous globe—
One faith against a whole earth's unbelief,
One soul against the flesh of all mankind.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

Think truly, and thy thoughts
Shall the world's famine feed;
Speak truly, and each word of thine
Shall be a fruitful seed;
Live truly, and thy life shall be
A great and noble creed.

—*Horatius Bonar.*

The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the
learned, that I should know how to speak a word
in season to him that is weary.—*Isaiah.* 50⁴

XIII

“THE TONGUE OF THE LEARNED”

SPEECH is one of the highest gifts of God to the highest beings of his creation. The tongue is ever prominent in expressions of the religious life. It was no accident that the symbol of power at Pentecost was a cloven tongue of fire. Nor was it by chance that the gift of tongues was present with the apostolic church.

The tongue for which Isaiah thanked God was the tongue of him that was taught. The significance is intransitive. He knew because he had learned what God had taught him. This is a rare use of the term, evidently as a rare expression of service. God had given him a message and he must deliver it.

Never was more need of a God-given message than now. Never has there been a time when such a message could do more for him that is weary. There is a vast

volume of untaught talking. There are self-appointed guides who utter foolish, freakish words and lead astray the unwary. There are false philosophers who go about talking of truth and love and brotherhood in a way that deceives the untaught. Some of them hail from the land where men still worship cows and bring to us the relics of a religion dead two thousand years ago. But foolish women led captive by silly fables listen to them and forsake the living God for a system which has degraded womanhood to the level of the beast.

If one is to speak a word in season to him that is weary, he must first know how. There are well-meaning but blundering people who try and fail because they do not know how. The well-intended consolation sometimes cuts like a knife because the speaker did not know how. The untaught surgeon may not only wound, he may slay. Half of the trouble of life is due to blunders, but that does not cure the case. There are men who are perfectly willing to accept high offices and try to fill them, but they don't know how. Any American feels that he could successfully edit a metropolitan news-

paper, but there is reason to believe that some who are now trying to do it don't really know how. Many of us would like to be able to play the great organ, but we don't know how. Most amateurs who have learned to run automobiles have sooner or later found that there are some things a man can't do till he knows how. The old-fashioned stationary gas engines were the most remarkable trouble breeders ever known, and firms who sold them kept "trouble men" on duty to go out on call and find out what was the matter. I have seen a crew of men lie in the shade a half day waiting for some man who did all that was needed in three minutes because he knew how. I reproved a Filipino boy once for holding a parrot by the tail. When I picked the bird up by its feet I had sudden and painful evidence that the boy knew how better than I. Once I tried to re-hair a fiddle-bow. The directions were specific. It looked easy. After a few hours I gave up, having succeeded mainly in decorating my clothes with horsehair and glue. Then one day I stepped into a shop and watched a workman do it who knew how. In about

three and one half minutes the job was finished, neatly and firmly, and with a twist of the wrist the bow hung on the peg to dry. He knew how. There is an ancient story of the pastor who came to the new charge admonished to be very careful not to hurt the feelings of the Ransom family—they were touchy. At the first service he gave out as the opening hymn, “Return, ye ransomed sinners, home”—and the family got up and went out.

What we need is to know how to do life’s work. The day will soon be gone when anybody can teach a Sunday school class. There was a time when “anybody” could preach, but he can’t do it now and get a hearing. Specialists are encroaching on the ground of the all-around men because they know how to do the special thing. Every particular age and class of persons has its trained worker. Boys’ work, girls’ work, mothers’ work, home mission work, foreign missions, immigration classes, study clubs of every variety; training schools in everything from politics to peanut-roasting; you cannot do anything any more without training. Once a man could go out and turn his hand

to anything that offered, but now he must know how.

All of this special training is good. You cannot be too well equipped for the business of life; but after the training of preparation comes another training that costs more and goes further and teaches better than the training of the schools. It is the training that comes from experience. There is no teaching quite equal to that you give yourself in the emergencies and experiences of actual work. If you have worked at my trade, you can speak a word in season that will help me because you *know*. If you have been in trouble, you can come to me in my sorrow and I will listen to you, for at the bier of bereavement you have been taught, and you know how to speak a word to the soul that is weary with grief. If the fires of temptation have scorched your soul, then come and tell me how you escaped the conflagration of sin. If you have found your way through to Jesus, then you can lead my feet in the way that yours have walked. You will know how. If you have known the loneliness of being a stranger in a strange land, then you

can help me in my isolation. And if you have found peace and joy in believing, you ought to be able to tell me of it and help me to find it too.

A word in season! Seasonableness is the saving quality of service. Unseasonableness is the bane of good intentions. And seasonableness is mostly the result of knowing how. Tact is a great fulcrum in life and across its vantage point we may sometimes move great issues. There are times when the whole destiny of a life may hang in the balance and the word in season will turn the case. Whole lives have been changed by a single word. A whole life has been influenced by a "God bless you" that the giver has probably forgotten. The word of the general at the crucial hour of the battle, the word of the statesman at the confused hour of the country, these are weighty and powerful. At some other time they are helpless. The man in the thick of the fight may be so clouded with dust that he becomes confused. A word of cheer from some hillock of clearer vision may work wonders for his spirit. Rooters at the game of life have their place, especially if they

be, most of the time, players. We can all root for each other, and the shout in season, how it nerves us for the pull! We tug and strain till we become obsessed by discouragement. The cheering word clears the air and ventilates the thought like a lightning flash. Suddenly we can see!

To him that is weary! And who has not been weary? The heaviest weariness is not that of the arm or back, but it is the weariness of the heart. What of the long years of waiting for the letter that never comes! And who has known the dull, deadening ache of the silent tarrying for the word of appreciation that is never spoken. Somehow mothers seem to get more than their share of this sort of thing; they toil on while we go our ways and plan our plans and enjoy life. Why, yes, of course. “She’s just mother!”

The father has his share. While mother toils at home he goes down to the shop and works on day after day and year after year, bringing home his pay for the benefit of the hungry mouths and shabby feet. Of course that is his business, and certainly he is glad enough to be able to do it, but a

little word of appreciation in season would help a lot. If Johnny brings home a good report, he is warmly appreciated; he ought to be. But some way, all the appreciation in the family flows one way, and the mother and father get very little of it. After a while there comes a time when the careless son stands by the still form and would give all he has to say the words so long unspoken, but it is too late.

There is the lesson of grief that we never learn till we have been through its shadows. It is this: we are glad to be talked to about our sorrow, when the words come from one who knows how because he has been through the dark valley himself. Grief does not resent recognition and fellowship. It is the maladroit, untaught, uninitiated tramping roughshod over sacred things that sets our nerves on edge and makes us turn the stony side of our natures to people about us. There is a lot of miscalled snobbishness that is just bluff to hide our lonesomeness within. There are some very demonstrative people who are so shaky within that they shout and tear about merely for fear some one will find it out.

“He wakeneth morning by morning . . . mine ear to hear as the learned.” To get a fresh message every morning for the new day, to keep in daily touch with headquarters, to always have fresh supply for him that is weary—here is the secret of efficient service.

XIV

THE FEW WHO ARE CHOSEN

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,

Fancies that broke through language and escaped:
All I could ever be,
All, men ignored in me,

This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher
shaped.

—*Robert Browning.*

A glorious band, the chosen few,
On whom the Spirit came;
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame.
They climbed the steep ascent to heaven
Through peril, toil, and pain;
O God! to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!

—*Reginald Heber.*

Many are called, but few are chosen.—*Jesus.*

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XIV

THE FEW WHO ARE CHOSEN

JESUS CHRIST was a great disturber. If in his day there had been a society organized for the purpose of suppressing all criticism he would not have been one of its members. Jewish authorities were intent upon maintaining things just as they were, and Jesus produced an element of unrest among the people. His church has done the same thing ever since, except when it has lost sight of its Lord.

There is a fallacy that holds human nature to be fixed and stable. Not many Americans hold such heresy, but determinism finds its followers and sometimes its overemphasis among us. The experiences of life make most of us good Arminians. Men change in character and condition, and change radically. Rich and poor, great and small, ruler and subject exchange places in a way bewildering and confusing to those who hold the pigeonhole hypothesis of life.

Barefooted boys become bank presidents, and millionaires die in the poorhouse. Herein is hope. In the possibility of flux and change lies new opportunity. While the terms of life are not fixed nor final, no one need be utterly discouraged. The doors are not closed.

Many are called. Whosoever will may come. The doctrine of free grace won out in the seventeenth century because it was scriptural, evangelical, and true to the facts of the age of individualism. And there is still room for all. God is not willing that any should perish, so long as all are willing to be saved. The great recruiting office is open. The "called" are all the people and the invitation is as wide as the world. He that will come, come now.

The calling of the many is a law of life. Schools and universities open their doors, and whosoever will meet the entrance requirements may enter in. Business houses advertise for workers, and the call goes to all alike. Art offers its treasures and its fascinating interest to any who will enter its life. Journalism, agriculture, engineering, public office, trades, professions, and

callings of every sort are doors of life waiting for those who will enter.

In like manner the kingdom of God opens its doors wide for any who will come in. By the open Bible, by the omnipresent providences of God, by the swinging church doors, the songs of the sanctuary, the preached word, the gospel ministry, the prayers of the saints, by the whole sweep and work of the kingdom of God, the call goes throughout the land to any who will hear, and he who hears may heed.

We have come to a new emphasis on the world-wide call. The nations of the earth, some of them waking from the sleep of ages, are hearing a call to larger life. The nations are called to the great family of modern civilization. We have not yet reached race equality nor dispossessed prejudice, but we are growing in grace and have gone far enough to admit the fundamental humanity of all nations under heaven.

Over against the truth that many are called stands another statement—"Few are chosen." Many have the opportunity, few succeed therein. The vast majority of those

to whom opportunity comes do not accept it. Many try, more or less; few succeed. There are relatively few outstanding successes in any occupation or profession. The majority of business men fail at some time or other. There are few great engineers and fewer still great executives. There are not many successful promoters. Not many farmers nor doctors nor lawyers nor mechanics nor teachers nor preachers make conspicuous successes of their lifework. Most of them are more or less intent upon something else than the main business of life. There is always room at the top—because so few ever reach it. In the lottery of life many chances are out, but there are few winning tickets.

In the kingdom of Christian service there are many called, but few who ever enter in any effective way. Many are enrolled upon the records of the church, but a few do all the work and get most of the benefits. Many enter the Christian life, live along at a poor, dying rate, turn aside, drift away, and are lost. The per cent of efficiency in Christian living is pitifully small in many lives. The fruits of the spirit are

often juiceless or frostbitten and sometimes worm-eaten to the core. There are so-called Christians who have never once known the joy of efficient service or satisfying experience.

And who are the chosen? The chosen are those who chose. Most of us are at the present moment as good as we chose to be. Being chosen implies a reaction within the life of him who is called. Men do not drift into success. People who merely try do not often succeed. The whosoever clause does not save any except those who will come.

The chosen are those who pay the price of victory. They not only try, but try with such coöperation that they succeed. Mere trying is not enough. The secret of succeeding is in trying in such manner that the forces with which we are aligned will help carry us on and up to victory. "So run that ye may obtain," exhorted Paul, past master in the science of efficiency. Why run at all, unless the runner is to reach some desired goal? Some Christian people appear to be content to "trot all day in the shade of a tree," but they are

not among the chosen. Excuses may be sometimes artistic literary efforts and convincing compositions, but they do not take the place of results. Two men go out on a quest. One returns with excellent excuses, but no results. The other comes back silent and scarred, but he has the things he went after. He is chosen. Both were called.

Not all the obstacles to success are individual. In an age of congested slums, organized monopoly, public service corporations, the limits of the exercise of a man's power to choose his own direction and destination in life have been contracted. Until the spirit of Jesus Christ is dominant in the economic and industrial life of the people it cannot be true in any large sense that the men who supply the raw labor of the land are free to any wide choice. They are bound to the wheel of toil with hardened thongs that may burn and cut, but cannot be loosened without help from other than themselves. The call to higher intelligence, cleaner living, better morals, and eternal life cannot be heard very clearly by a man who lives in a treadmill from which

there is no escape except into the penitentiary or through the gates of death. We have a vast task yet before us if we are to set up the kingdom of God upon earth and make real the theory that every man has an equal chance. At least it is our part to see that every man has some chance for worthy living.

There are multitudes of people who at some time in their lives have heard a call to Christian service. Some men have "thought of" the ministry and some have had uneasy stirrings of conscience when they heard anyone speak of foreign missions. There are uncounted thousands of women who at some time have felt that it would be a high privilege to give their lives to God for the service of humanity, but they became school-teachers, or office women, or housewives instead. There are other multitudes of younger people who to-day are thinking these same thoughts and wondering whether they may be among the chosen. The forms of Christian service have become so many and varied that almost any kind of ability may find a place somewhere for investment in the kingdom

of Christian service. Many are called, but of this host of the called the majority of young men and young women will enter some other occupation than those of direct Christian work. Most of them will remain faithful to the Christian life, but a few will drift back into careless and indifferent living. But the relatively few who heed the call and actually go into the service will be the chosen. And of this number it is a tragedy that not all attain any thorough success.

It costs something to be chosen. "Blessed are the dead-in-earnest, for they shall be among the chosen," might be added to the list of supplementary man-made beatitudes. Not the fairly good, reasonably effective, passable Christians, but the whole-hearted, thoroughgoing, stop-at-nothing; these shall be chosen for high-efficiency duty. One is taken and another left. Two men ate together at the noon hour. One passed the spare half hour in idle gossip, the other pored over a book of technical instruction. Which one was promoted? The one who paid the price. Long ago a baby was hid in a floating cradle among the reeds of the

Nile. Rescued by the king's daughter, he was trained in luxury and aristocracy, but years afterward he returned a strong man who defied Pharaoh and set the captives free. Why? Because he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He paid the price of leadership, and God chose him for the highest office of his age.

God has evolved a universe with forces running here and there. Orderly methods mark his dealings in nature and with men. He who would find success in his life should first find the forces that work that way and link his soul with them. "Find what God is doing, and do the same thing," said G. Campbell White, "if you are looking for success." If you are going to New York, board the train that runs that way. Never mind the theories of transportation; leave that to the management. Merely to be called is not enough. To be chosen is the *high* calling of life, and to be found among those whom God has chosen for his larger tasks is worth all it costs.

XV

THE TRAGEDY OF CHRISTMAS

In life's small things be resolute and great
To keep thy muscle trained; knowest thou when fate
Thy measure takes? or when she'll say to thee,
"I find thee worthy; do this deed for me"?

—*James Russell Lowell.*

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome
gate

He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,
Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;
And a loathing over Sir Launfal came;
The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,
The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,
And midway its leap his heart stood still

Like a frozen waterfall;
For this man, so foul and bent of stature,
Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,
And seemed the one blot on the summer morn—
So he tossed him a piece of gold in his scorn.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

There was no room for them in the inn.—*Luke.*

He came unto his own, and his own received him
not.—*John.* / "

XV

THE TRAGEDY OF CHRISTMAS

WHEN we read John's lament we think of Hofmann's picture of the Christ standing at the door of every man's life, knocking for admittance. That is not the thought of John. It is not the world's rejection that troubled John, but the fact that his own would not receive him. There was nothing very strange about the world's rejection. Jesus had condemned the world by his life and teaching, and the world made away with him of course. But these were his own, and the peculiar tragedy of Christmas is that Jesus is rejected in the house of his friends. With truth has it been said that these are the saddest words ever spoken.

He came to Bethlehem, and there was no room at the inn. The Bethlehemites were not bad people; they had nothing whatever against him, but they were busy about other things. But the hard fact re-

mains that among his own tribesmen, and in the city of David, there was no room to receive him. In the first year of his ministry he came to Jerusalem with redemption for the nation, and the nation through its rulers would have none of it. Then he went back to Galilee, where he had spent his youth, and they rejected him there. In his own town of Nazareth he had no honor. Capernaum would not recognize his royal claims. Back and forth he went for three years, finding no reception anywhere that afforded opportunity for the inauguration of his kingdom. The common people flocked about him, they heard him gladly and received his gifts of teaching and healing and feeding, and went their ways.

Back to Jerusalem the last time, he cried out over the wayward city, the heartbreak of his rejection, and rode through its gates to his arrest and death. And the men who laid hands upon him and crucified him were not aliens; they were his own. It will always stand out as the supreme ingratitude of the ages that when the Redeemer came to his own chosen people to proclaim liberty to the captives, the Jews rose up and slew

their Messiah. True, they were not very different from others who have burned their emancipators at the stake or beheaded them on the block, but they did furnish the most conspicuous example of ingratitude that the world has ever seen.

There is a sense in which he comes, not only to his own, but to every man. He is that light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He is that Divine Spirit that stands beside the savage as he bows before his image of stone, and he pleads with the rudimentary conscience for obedience to its dim light. Whenever there is a sincere act of worship, though it be worship of false gods, there stands the living Christ, longing to be revealed to the worshiper. And with patience, passing understanding, he waits and waits until those who have learned his name come with the message of life to the heathen in his blindness. Men cannot reject him until they first know him, and with the new knowledge comes a new act of the will. As soon as they know him they may reject him—that is the pathos of it. After he has waited and brooded and longed for en-

trance—to be rejected by those whom he has come to claim for his own!

He comes to the “moral man” and seeks to enter his heart with spiritual life. What furnishes the inner moral sense of the man who lives a fairly decent life outside the church and without the Christ? Whence come the impulses for good? How does this Christless man know right from wrong, and whence are the good promptings that keep his feet from the paths of gross and groveling sins? Verily, he comes to multitudes of men who have received and enjoyed every benefit of Christian civilization, and they reject him continually. To see poured into a man’s life a thousand benefits and then see the recipient coolly reject the Giver of it all, is to wonder whether such a man can know what he does.

He comes in the experiences of life. Trouble in some form comes to all of us, and with trouble Jesus always comes. We may receive him or reject him, but we will meet the trouble anyway. There is no promise that those who follow will escape trouble, but there is a mighty difference

between the way trouble affects his devout followers and the way it acts upon those who live without him. Trouble rolls over some people and swallows them up, while others rise upon its billows to victorious comfort and strength in the midst of their grief. What makes the difference? Just this: one received him, the other receives him not. To reject him is to sink beneath the wave; to receive him is to rise above it. That is the difference, and that is the secret. Does he not come in every experience of life? How else can *all things* work together for good? Surely, this is the great decisive question for men. Do we receive him in the events of our lives or do we reject him?

He comes in the call to service. Every opportunity to do something for him is Jesus at the door. Reject the service and you reject him. Accept it and you receive him. The very fact of the call means that he counts you in as his own. If he calls any at all, he calls his own, and when he asks you to do something, then know that he has counted you in. But if we have no room for his service, then how

can we receive him in whose name it is asked?

The sting of this sentence of John's is the tragedy of ingratitude. Is it true that the more God does for men the less they appreciate the Giver and the gift? I don't know, but, surely, it is not so bad as that. George Eliot, in *Romola*, tells us of Tito, who as a child was rescued from street beggary by old Baldassare. He was educated and loaded with every good thing, but he longed to get away from the city of his low origin, and he persuaded his foster-father to sell all and start for Florence. Overtaken by shipwreck, the boats were separated. Baldassare was captured and enslaved by pirates and Tito made his way to Florence, where by sale of the gems which represented the family fortune, he made his way to wealth and power. He stifled his conscience with the suggestion that his father must be dead; if not, he would be in the way at Florence anyway. A message from Baldassare, sold into slavery, begged for ransom, but Tito only hardened his heart. One day in the public square a crowd gathered about an old man.

Tito drew near, was accosted by his father, but turned away without recognition, and in answer to the question of his friends, replied, "I don't know him ; some mad-man surely."

This is not a pleasing story to think about, but it represents pretty accurately the rejection of Jesus at the hands of the men for whom he died. It is a hard story, but it is the story of many a man's treatment of Jesus Christ. His very own received him not, and men to-day are doing the same thing.

Here is another story that leaves a better taste in the mouth: A poor widow worked her fingers bare to help her only son through college. He insisted that she should attend his graduation. She protested, but he insisted, and when they had made her as presentable as possible he proudly escorted her to the best seat he could find. He sat in his place on the platform until he had received his diploma and a badge for special scholarship earned by honest, hard work. Then he rose in the face of that audience, and, without waiting for the close of the program, made his way

down to where his mother sat and pinned the badge on her shabby shawl, saying, "There it is, mother; you earned it, and you shall wear it." That's more like it.

Sometimes we sing,

"O Jesus, thou art standing
Without the fast closed door;
In lowly patience waiting,
To cross the threshold o'er,"

and we think with bitter reproach of the hard-hearted worldlings who will not let him come into their hearts. But that is not what we are singing about. It is *Christians*, his own people, who are singing. Go on with the hymn,

O shame, thrice shame upon us,
His name and sign who bear;
O shame, thrice shame upon us,
To keep him standing there.

Yes, it is to us, "His name and sign who bear," that he comes again and again, and we are so busy with our own little affairs that we do not rise and let him in. He comes to his own and his own will not let him in—that is the terrible accusation of the hymn. And who among us will stand and deny the charge? Let him that is

without sin cast the first stone. But there is another verse:

O Lord, with shame and sorrow,
We open now the door;
Dear Saviour, enter, enter,
And leave us nevermore.

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”

XVI

“WHOM SHALL I SEND?”

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The Lord wants reapers; O mount up,
Before night comes, and says “Too late!”
Stay not for taking scrip or cup,
The Master hungers while ye wait;
’Tis from these heights alone your eyes
The advancing spears of day can see,
Which o’er the eastern hilltops rise,
To break your long captivity.

—*James Russell Lowell.*

Hark the voice of Jesus calling,
“Who will go and work to-day?
Fields are white and harvests waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?”
Loud and long the Master calleth,
Rich reward he offers free;
Who will answer gladly saying,
“Here am I, send me, send me!”

—*Daniel March.*

Whom shall I send? and who will go for us?—
Isaiah. 6⁸

XVI

“WHOM SHALL I SEND?”

VISIONS and voices have always been prominent in religious consciousness. Religion without vision and life without voice are fruitless and impotent, but when vision and voice become the end, rather than the means, there is always unbalance and abnormality. Spiritualism, occultism, impractical mysticism, and unhealthy emotionalism result from visions followed for the ecstasy or curiosity of seeing something. But we cannot do without the vision, and our propaganda will soon come to an end without the voice.

There are various media through which visions come. Just now it is the fashion to look for the divine trace in the open field and listen for the voice in the world of nature. That is good enough within its limits. There is, however, a vision of God in the temple. It was there that Isaiah saw his glory lifted up and filling the

holy place. The temple is sacred to him whose conscience is aroused within its walls, and where conscience is stirred there is always vision. Many of us fail to see and hear because we are not in the right place. Some people have a great faculty of always being somewhere else when the great thing happens. Two conditions are named in Isaiah's sixth chapter. The heart must be reverent and the life must be clean. What Isaiah saw and what we long to see is not more elaborate hangings about the altar, more gorgeous decorations of the chancel, nor yet more complicated ritual in the service. What we hunger for is the face of God. When we see him the sense of unworthiness always follows. And when we know that we are undone and unclean, then are we ready for the live coal from off the altar. "Cleanse us, O Lord, even if by fire," we cry out. Irreverence and impurity always make barren lives.

At the heart of this vision is a voice ringing out in a question, "Whom shall I send?" Here is the inner motive of it all—God's eternal quest for men. For this is no sudden and new cry. Isaiah heard the

voice crying in continuous call for men who may respond to the call and go.

The world is searching for men; why should not God also send forth his call? Commercial companies, railroad companies, and governments are on the watch for men—not mere job-holders and salary-collectors, but *men*. And the kind of men in demand are those who are big enough and strong enough to make their own places in the world. There is always a place for a man like that. There are men who get on very well if some one will find them a job, show them what to do, and where and how and when, and then find the pay for them when the day is done. The world needs some of these; but most of us have to hunt up the world and persuade it that we can do the thing that it wants done. The men who make their own places are the Livingstones and Lincolns and Moodys and Wesleys and Luthers and Ericssons and Edisons of life. The world is crying out for men who can solve its problems, and clear up its dark places and improve its life.

Every man hears only the call which his ear is in tune to catch. One man hears the

call to statesmanship, another becomes a ward boss. Some are hearing calls to service and some to invention and some to business and some to sacrifice. The call is in the air. There is no more accurate index to your own inner standards of life than this: what do you hear in the call?

Back of the world's search is God's eternal call. Tense and vibrant, like the call of the surf or the moan of the winds in the pines, it rings on, finding its way to the soul of him who has ears to hear. From the beginning God has been hunting for men. For every great task a great man is needed, and the task always waits for the man. God has never done any great thing in human history until he has found some man big enough to handle the job. Earth's chosen heroes have always been men who have stood alone. Count them o'er, and they tower like tall trees above the forest of humanity: Noah, Abram, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Isaiah; events paused till they appeared, each to do the work for which he was called. The salvation of the Gentiles waited for Paul. The Reformation waited for Luther. The

English revival waited for Wesley. The Salvation Army waited for Booth. Nationalism waited for Lincoln, and every great cause waits till some man answers the call.)

All men are not called to the same kind of service. Once the minister was the only man whom God called, at least so we were told. Then the missionary came in for a share. Then came the deaconesses and Young Men's Christian Association workers and the whole host of people who have given their lives to some form of Christian service. There is one form of call that has not been given due prominence yet. We are very urgent in our insistence upon the need of money for the undertakings of the kingdom of God, and we press home the responsibility of the man of means for the use of his money. But we fail to go back of those conditions and listen to the eternal call of God for volunteers who will give their lives to the making of money for the extension of the kingdom of God upon earth. Suppose that pastors present this claim of God along with the claims for missionary service and on the same basis! Is there not

a place for such a plea? Here are two college mates. One plans to give his life as a missionary upon a foreign field. He will live upon the salary paid by the church through its missionary society, some thousand or twelve hundred dollars a year. His time and thought and talent all belong to God for the work. But his chum, with equal ability and consecration, has talents which are not available for ordinary missionary work. His instincts are commercial, and his ability is that which can organize enterprises and accumulate large profits. Is he therefore shut out of the ranks of volunteers? Has God no use for a man who can give his life to the making of money for the support of his chum and others who give their lives to the propagation of the cause in foreign lands? Surely, we have missed a point here. Let the money-maker volunteer on the same basis as the soul-saver. Let him live upon the same salary and devote his surplus to the use of the church in any one or all of its various extension enterprises. Shall his share in the victory be any less than that of the man who goes out to serve on the field?

If for every missionary on the field we had one efficient and consecrated money-maker at home, where would the cause of foreign missions be to-day? Vastly in advance of its present position, surely. For the whole Methodist Episcopal Church that would mean a couple of thousand men to take care of the missionary enterprise in vastly greater measure than we have yet attained. But the presence in the church of a band of men who had so given their lives to the bringing in of the kingdom would revive and inspire the whole church to deeper earnestness and larger service, and the influence at home would be as great as that abroad. Verily, the call is sounding, on and on, like the roar of a shell or the incessant note of a city street. Who will hear? God is calling for men.

(There is a significant thing about this call that Isaiah heard. It was not specific, his name was not mentioned. No great imperative spoke out of the smoke, and said, "Here, Isaiah, you go." It was the general, eternal call that he heard. Many people still wait for the lightning flash, the thunderbolt.) We sit here idle in the

church all day, waiting for some special delivery message with a personal address, while the world, perishing in darkness, calls by its destitution and need for help. For a man who has been fighting against God there must sometimes be the Damascus-road experience, but why should God knock down a man already in his church and given to his service? "Whom, whom shall I send?"—that is the cry—a call for volunteers, not a conscription. The decision is in your hands; why don't you answer?

God calls men through the need of the world. By its sick beds there is need of nursing. By its hearts, grief-stricken and trouble-worn, the world cries out, "Who will come over and help us?" By its tempted youth and untaught helplessness it cries out for rescue. Who will go? Need we wait till we are forced into service? Robert E. Speer says that it is the part of the volunteer to prove that he should not go. Well, it is certain that the insistent, eternal call is for those who will rise up and cry in return, "Here am I, send me!" It takes more grace and more grit to suc-

ceed as a volunteer than as one impressed into service. But what of it! Are we to serve for a minimum or for a maximum of results and responsibility?

We talk of “the church.” And, pray, who are the church? The church ought to do more work, the church ought to be more sociable, the church ought to take more interest in its indifferent members, the church—yes, it’s all true. But who constitute the church? Who but those whose names are on its records and who receive of its benefits from week to week. Change the form and instead of “the church” say “I,” and see how it will sound then! Whenever we begin to say to ourselves, “What ought the church to do for me?” we are missing the point. “What ought I to do for the church?” and “What ought the church (I) to do for the people?” That is the question.

Whom shall we send? Did you ever hear anyone say that some one else could surely do it better than the one who was called upon for service? Well, that is not the “Here am I, send me” spirit. We shall never take the world till that excuse

is forgotten and we find people everywhere asking for service, instead of dodging it.

Every man is responsible for his acts to the extent of his vision. If you see the promised land, then you must enter or turn back. If you hear the voice, then you must answer or be counted out. If you have seen the vision in the temple, then you must realize that vision in your life or lose the power to see. Seeing visions in the temple is not Christian service, though many people appear to think that having seen the vision and heard the voice, and perhaps hoped that some one would answer, they have done their full share toward saving the world. We suffer under an emotional illusion. We hear an appeal, are slightly stirred by it, and imagine that we have done something when we have done nothing whatever, but feel a little bit of emotional response to the call to do something. When shall we waken?

XVII

NEHUSHTAN

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul!
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave the low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea.
—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

To combat Pharisaism, unmask imposture, overturn tyrannies, usurpations, prejudices, falsehoods, superstitions—to demolish the temple in order to rebuild it—that is to say, to substitute the true for the false; to protect the weak, poor, suffering, and crushed; to combat for the persecuted and oppressed—such was the war of Jesus Christ.—*Victor Hugo.*

He . . . brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan—*2 Kings 18. 4.*

XVII

NEHUSHTAN

THE shining serpent of healing had become a piece of brass—*nehushtan*. What was once the saving of the people was now useless junk—and worse. The people were burning incense before it. From being the savor of life unto life it had become the harbinger of death. Once men stricken with the plague of serpents had looked to it and lived. Now men bowed before it in worship and died. It hindered now as much as it helped then. And Moses brake it in pieces—an outgrown, outworn thing, from which the life and usefulness had forever departed. It was a piece of brass—*nehushtan*.

What happened to the brazen serpent has happened to a lot of things. The ox-cart, the wooden plow, the three-oared trireme, the tallow dip, the hand loom, the stagecoach, and a thousand other things—these were once the best the world had

to offer. The civilization of the plains of Mamre was once the best the world knew. It was patriarchal and a vast improvement upon lawless nomadism without centralized authority. China was once away ahead of her contemporaries, and she laid permanent foundations in ancestor-worship. Roman civilization was once the zenith of the world's life. Egyptian architecture overtopped all that had gone before. But every one of these forms of life became a dead thing when life moved on and up and left the shell empty behind. And for some reason humanity has a tendency to burn incense before the thing of brass.

There is a law of life and form that is universal. Life in growing develops form. Form crystallizes, life grows on. Sometimes life merely moves out of form and sometimes it shatters it to fragments. When the form stands intact it nearly always becomes a clog to progress. All petrified form is fatal to growth.

The Jewish tabernacle in the wilderness was once the very throne of God. Its curtains inclosed the Holy of holies and its posts upheld the visible shelter round

about the ark and the cherubim. But its curtains faded, its hangings fell, and its posts crumbled to dust. Was God, therefore, no longer with his people? Nay, God filled all the heavens, and with the building of the new temple the outgrown tabernacle of the wilderness was forgotten. The temple of Solomon was once the highest form of ecclesiastical architecture and the worship of that temple the most exalted form of adoration known to men. But that temple has for ages now been a stone heap, and we cannot reproduce even the forms of its service. Has God, therefore, forsaken his people? The Jewish Sabbath was once the closest link between God and the hearts of his people. To-day the hosts of Christendom set aside the first day, and not the seventh, for the Sabbath of the Lord their God. Bloody sacrifices were once the chosen highway of approach unto the Most High. Because they have ceased is there no access to the throne of Grace? A thousand institutions of the Christian Church have arisen, fulfilled their function as containers of life, been outgrown, discarded, and broken to pieces as useless

brass for the rubbish heap. Buddhism was once a moral force. Confucianism at one time had its high value for a mighty people. Taoism taught its lesson and Shintoism ministered to its time. Mohammedanism was once a religious force of vitality and power.

There was a time when the Vatican was the main truss of Christian faith. Once the elaborate ritual of the mass throbbed with life and power. Sometimes it may do so yet. Usually it is a dead form, before which the people bow while incense is burned under the piece of brass. Calvinism was once a vehicle of truth and power for men. Infallibility once held men steady in the whirl of the current. Every man-made creed was once a living, breathing thing that gripped with power the hearts of wavering men. Most of them have become outworn brass.

The law of the brazen serpent holds good in personal living. When you were a child you believed as a child, which was good—for the child. But there are people who still burn incense before the faith of childhood, which is not good for the adult.

Children's clothes are excellent things for children, but when we try to wear them in later life they become grotesque, or worse. There came a "why" time in life, somewhere along that adolescent time when all the scenery suddenly began to shift its foundations, and the faith of childhood had a severe earthquake. Jesus never condemned an honest question, but he had much to say to people who had become empty shells and whited sepulchers, full of dead men's bones.

The passing of the old order is rarely ever a time of peace and joy. It is usually a time of distress and turmoil. There is the rending of walls and the upheaval of foundations. Take comfort from the facts of experience; these times are rarely fatal, and after the dust and smoke have cleared away there remain broader foundations for better and greater buildings than were ever possible on the old footing. When we are terrified by the noises of cracking and roaring we need not become frenzied with fear. Rather may we rejoice that life is again asserting its supremacy and making for itself a new and larger home. It is

a disconcerting time to the mother when the boy outgrows and breaks through his clothes, but there is no real cause for panic. It is hard on the clothes, but the boy himself is in no danger.

Your little girl plays a tune with one finger. It is quite an achievement for four years. I had a neighbor once who played a march on the piano. It was a good enough march for the first half dozen times. But there came a time when that same march threatened to set all of us to marching to any place where we could escape the sound of it. There are Christians who began the service of God years ago with a song. It was a good tune then; but if they are harping away on the same tune yet there is something wrong. There was a boy who gave fifty cents one year to missions. This standard he faithfully maintained through the years, until, worth a hundred thousand dollars, he still gave his half dollar to the cause. There are people who have at some time done a worthy thing, and can talk of nothing else forever after. There are preachers who talk of their last church, and members of

churches who are always reminded of the last preacher. What is the reward of achievement? Certainly not to glorify the achiever and talk about it forever. Nobody cares what you did. The question is, What can you do now? Much hobby-riding is merely *nehushtan*—outworn usefulness.

There is the law of outworn religious experience. It becomes junk. Your religion is not what it used to be. If it is, you are an anomaly. God never intended that it should go on unchanged and unchanging. The old joy is gone, the old power has perished, the old song is silent. Who can deny it? What shall we do? Sometimes we try to revive the old experience. We burn incense before it, we put flowers on it, we paint it in glowing colors, and there is no result. There is a mighty pathos about the attempt to go through an old experience again after it has become a form with the life gone out of it. There was a time when the highest rule in the family was that of obedience. But there comes a time when a higher rule takes the place of obedience, and that higher rule is

self-control. Even God expects us to come to self-control.

What about your consecration? Has it ever shrunk on your hands? Once you gave to Jesus all that you were and had, and you have taken nothing back, but the life has gone out of your heart. What is the matter? You are puzzled at the innate tendency to run down that seems ingrained in your life. You cannot get the old thrill back again. There were words which once brought to you the very power of God. Now they are merely technical terms that are sounding brass. You have moved on, and not always up, but you have moved out of them.

The serpent that Moses made was never intended to be a final thing. It was only a prophecy of the coming of One who when lifted up would draw all men to himself for a healing that should be infinite. The end of life's experiences is not fixed detail and final form, but is prophetic of the coming of that life that shall "richer, fuller be."

The old had to be broken up to get it out of the way of the new. There could be no spiritual life in Israel so long as the people

were bowing down before the rusty old serpent. Every passing experience is a step toward a climax by and by. And when we reach the climax it will grow old and lead on to something better ahead. Woe unto those who get all the problems of life settled in final form and fold their minds away on the shelf. Nothing that lives can ever be settled. When it settles it dies. The climax toward which all the symbols and ceremonies and types and sacrifices of the Jewish ritual led was Calvary. Here focus all the hopes and fears of the years through which God led his people by ever changing forms and voices. Here was the end of form, the passing of blood sacrifice, the rending of the veil. Surely, here is one fixed thing to stand unchanged through the ages—the cross! Well, we cannot see beyond the cross to day, but we may be very sure that on its further side is a pathway that leads onward and upward from glory to glory even as by the spirit of the Lord.

If we stop in the form, even the form of the cross, we shall miss the Master. If we look to the cross with its arms of wood, and are helped, rejoice, but move on, and get

close to Him who died there and then forever left the cross behind in the glory of his resurrected life. If you are helped by technical terms, by ritualistic forms, be glad, and don't burn incense before the form. If the crutch is an aid to learn walking, use it, but get onto your own feet as soon as you can, and when you can walk throw away the crutch.

At the heart of life there are three things toward which we constantly press. There is a closer personal relation with God, there is a deeper spiritual passion, and there is a broader spiritual sympathy and service. There is not much else that does not grow old with the using and become a band of restriction. But he that doeth the will shall know. And while it doth not yet appear what we shall be, we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, and that will be enough.

XVIII

THREE FOOLS

I saw a farmer plow his land who never came to
sow;

I saw a student filled with truth to practice never
go;

In land or mind I never saw the ripened harvest
grow.

—*Saadi, translated by James Freeman Clarke.*

Souls of men! why will ye scatter

Like a crowd of frightened sheep?

Foolish hearts! why will ye wander

From a love so true and deep?

—*F. W. Faber.*

At thirty man suspects himself a fool;

Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;

At fifty chides his infamous delay,

Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;

In all the magnanimity of thought

Resolves, and re-resolves; then dies the same.

—*Edward Young.*

The way of a fool is right in his own eyes.—
Solomon.

Prov. 12

XVIII

THREE FOOLS

THE Bible is the greatest textbook ever written on common sense and the best commentary on foolishness. No book has ever done half so much to interpret the human heart, to illuminate human nature, to untangle human motives, or to clear the obstructed path for weary feet. There is something about the book that clarifies the atmosphere of a life and helps a man to see straight in the common affairs of daily life. Any man who will study the book and make an honest effort to follow its teachings is bound to act with some measure of sense. The Bible is the greatest antidote for foolishness the world has ever known. Many a family tragedy and business failure would have been saved by the practice of daily Bible-reading.

There is a measure of folly ingrained in human nature. Let him that is without un wisdom cast the first stone. If this were

not true, many beautiful but impractical theories would work well in daily life. If only human nature were uniformly wise and steady, what a world we could make of it! The most ardent socialist might claim our allegiance. There is not much wrong with his system. The difficulty is with poor human nature, which cannot stand the strain of constant opportunity to make a fool of itself. If people would only cease to be selfish and work just as hard for the common good as for the personal gain, we should have the end of our prayers shortly.

There are three classes of fools, as there are three great tragedies, and the relation between the tragedies and the fools is close. Most of us fall occasionally into some one of these classes. Some of us attain a fairly permanent residence in one or the other of them, and a few people achieve all of them at once.

First, there is the mental fool. His is the tragedy of a defective personality. There are "fool families" that have a soft spot somewhere in their craniums. It is hard to define the exact defect, but that something is wrong is all too evident.

These are the folks with a "streak" in them, and ne'er-do-wells of every community. Their defects range all the way from being a little queer to a state of violent insanity. Some of them are interesting, and most of them have some degree of usefulness, but they are "off." Neurasthenia, hypochondria, delusions, fixed ideas, obsessions, and revelations mark the peculiarities of these people. Perhaps most of us have soft spots in our personalities somewhere, who shall say? Is the man who has a cramp every time he sees red any worse off than he who indulges in a mental spasm every time his wife mentions a new hat? Is it any worse to believe that you cannot eat mutton than to hold faith in ghosts or refuse to eat a good dinner when there are thirteen persons at the table? Some people are destitute on good incomes; some people get the idea that they cannot do certain easily performed acts, and other people go about saying that they have no headache, and that there is no pain nor sickness nor sin nor death, when all these things are all too evident realities to any man with a sound

mind. Christian Science, so called, is but one form of the "squinting brain" of Dr. Holmes's breakfast-table talk.

This first form of folly is always tragic, because the man tries, and tries hard it may be, but fails through some inherent defect in his make-up. He may do his best and fall short because his best is below par. He may run ever so swiftly, but he has a club foot. Nature has hamstrung him at the start. The girl was just as pretty as she could be, but, poor girl, she *couldn't* be very pretty, for in her case the blessing of beauty had been withheld. There are preachers who cannot preach, there are fiddlers who cannot play, and singers who cannot sing, and lawyers who cannot talk, and salesmen and cooks and writers who do their poor little best, but it falls short of real efficiency, and these defectives deserve naught but our pity.

There is a second class of fools which includes people with defective judgment. They have plenty of ability, and sometimes are brilliant on certain lines, but they blunder in putting two and two together and fail to connect with the facts. To

this class belongs the man who thinks that he can get something for nothing, which is one of the great primary delusions of all time. This second kind of fool often falls down on the financial side of his life. His folly may take one of two general forms: either he greatly exaggerates the value of money, or he thinks that he can evade the law of earning and saving and get rich rapidly by some short cut. If once a man gets the wrong focus in his financial thinking, he thinks and thinks about money until he gets money on his brain and believes that there is nothing else worth thinking about. Sound enough on other subjects, his judgment on financial matters becomes defective. All life is measured in terms of dollars. Niagara is estimated in terms of horse-power, flower beds are wasted until they produce potatoes, there is nothing in the sunset except indications of rain on the morrow, there is small value in the new carpet, the stove in the kitchen, the pictures on the wall, the college course, or in anything else that may not be turned into collateral.

The man who thinks that he can get

something for nothing is in a worse way still. He buys mining shares and stock in rubber plantations. He helps to float promotion schemes; he "gets in on the ground floor," he acquires gold bricks and gets caught on get-rich-quick devices. He has the speculation fever and becomes a gambler in fact. Worse still, this man is usually incurable. Preachers once inoculated with this speculation mania forfeit their high calling for a mess of shares in some company. High officials of the Church of Jesus Christ have allowed their names to be used on the letter heads of promotion corporations for the purpose of selling stock to the humble investor. Pastors have lost their usefulness, and sometimes their characters, for some petty promotion project. Most of these fools are so busy getting rich that they have little time to attend to the annoying details of family expenses. If it were not for the grocer they would get along nicely. Judged by their real estate holdings and paper shares, they are wealthy, but they are always short of cash.

There is a third fool, greater than the other two. He is the man who knowingly

tries to defeat the moral law. His is the tragedy of the perverted will. He knows better, he would like to do better, but he thinks that he can beat the game and deliberately does the wrong thing. Beside this man the tragedies of the weak mind and the perverted judgment are small matters. This man goes against his better moral judgment, tries to stand out against the forces of the universe, and that were tragedy enough. He could do the right if he would, but he deliberately chooses to do the wrong.

Verily, this is the primal delusion of Eden. "Ye shall not surely die," said the serpent. Sin is not really sin, and its results are not real results. Two and two are not really four, but something between three and five; there may be a crack wide enough to slip through somewhere. Millions think that they may yet find some way to dodge the moral law of Omnipotence. If God is not mocked, then this is the supreme folly of life. In spite of all theories and delusions, the harvest will bring back the same kind of grain as that which was sown in the field.

The young man thinks that he can sow his wild oats, defile his body, smirch his soul, and come out unscathed, but he cannot do it. The young woman thinks that she can lead a giddy life, play fast and loose with the sacred things of life, trifle with love, play with fire, and settle down no worse for the experience, but it cannot be done that way. The bitter end will come. The business man thinks that he can reap where he has not sown, that he can make money where he has made no investment, and that by sharp practice he can get in between the factors of legitimate profit and get a rake-off that will make him rich at another's expense, but it all comes back to him in the end. There are thousands who think that they can play fast and loose with other people's interests and not get caught. Well, once in a while some man does all that, and does get some money into his pocket by the process, but what he gets into his soul costs him infinitely more than all the fortunes made and lost by sharp practices. And the one man who gets rich by such means stands for a thousand men who have miserably failed. And

the exceptional man cannot escape the price. He settles the account with his honor, his reputation and his soul, in the end.

In the great day whose shall those things be for which he paid the highest price that any man can pay in the market of life? For the follies of the defective mind or the perverted judgment there may be found a mantle of charity large enough to cover many mistakes, but for the moral insanity of the man who deliberately goes in the face of God's immutable law where is there any excuse or help in the day of retribution? The multimillionaire who has absorbed the earnings of his fellow men may appear to prosper for a time, but one thing is sure: for all these things God will exact an accounting.

The trouble with the moral fool is that he loses the power to see moral issues aright. What appear to the normal man as plain and inexorable facts to him are only hazy possibilities. "Hell fire is but a figure of speech," he parries, forgetting that a figure is always less than the reality for which it stands. Hell fire is merely figure

of speech? Well, if that be figure, how much hotter must be the reality for which the figure stands!

The ethical standards of a multitude of men may be summed up in the formula, "Sin is not so bad after all." Back to Eden again; that was what the serpent said to Eve. The exceeding folly of this moral fool lies in the fact that he entirely misses the point. Sin is a subtraction from a man's capital in life. There is no rebate, no recoup. When a man has sinned away his best days and brightest possibilities they are gone, and gone forever. His soul may be saved? Yes, what's left of it; but even so, he will stumble out into eternity a crippled spirit to meet his record and face his God. The prodigal son found his way back to the father's house and got a good dinner, but most of us have missed the fact that he did not get a new inheritance. That was gone forever.

What is the one supreme, all-inclusive folly of life? It is this: to try to get along without God. A man may do without many things—farms, mansions, automobiles, and powerful connections—but he

cannot get along without moral foundations. That was the tragedy of the house on the sand. It was a perfectly good house, as good as the one on the rock, but there was nothing under it that could stand the storm. We may leave God out of account for a while, but one day he steps in and we must face our records and listen while the balance is struck.

All this about fools and folly and no word concerning the way of escape. Well, we have had so much of the way of escape that some men have come to think that it does not much matter after all. If the good and loving God thinks so much of men as is claimed, then he will find some way to avert the effects of sin and folly and get us safely through in the end. Surely, there is no great cause for alarm.

But the mercies of God are no more certain than the necessities of the moral law of God, and there will be men going through eternity crippled in both feet who might have been made whole by courageous moral surgery. If you find yourself in either of the first two classes of fools, read your Bible, talk with your wisest friends, get all

the help you can. But if you are a fool of the perverse will, turn about quickly, haste to the foot of the cross and implore forgiveness of the God against whom you have sinned. You will find there a Saviour ready to forgive and help you rectify the judgments of your life.

XIX

SOUL-SUICIDE

The wages of sin is death; if wages of Virtue be
dust,

Would she have heart to endure for the life of
the worm and the fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no quiet seas of the
just,

To rest in a golden grove, or to bask in a summer
sky;

Give her the wages of going on, and not to die.

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

Now I know that when a man takes power
From God, makes use of it for his own ends,
That power becomes his master, tyrant set
To drive a blinding fury through his soul
And vent a savage, wild destruction on
Himself. Such power, when used as gift of God,
May lift its master high and make him strong
To be and do. But snatched by greedy grasp
From out the hand divine, runs riot o'er
His life; at last turns back upon himself
And there he falls, run through and through by
that

Same sword he seized from God!

—*George A. Miller.*

The soul that sinneth, it shall die.—*Ezekiel.* 18

4, 20

XIX

SOUL-SUICIDE

THE deepest passion of the human soul is that of self-preservation. Nothing touches the quick of human interest more than a life endangered and a thrilling rescue. Not long since the headlines of the nation's newspapers were filled for forty days with the details of the existence of a miner entombed two hundred feet below the surface until frenzied rescuers dug him out. From the fact that after he was brought back to the world of living men again he spent his time exhibiting himself in saloons for a collection, it might appear that he was hardly worth so much interest and effort, but it was the appeal of a life that held the country spellbound.

Down deeper than the craving for physical life is the instinct for eternal life, perhaps one of the very deepest cravings of all being. To live, even though it be under circumstances of suffering and misery—

anything rather than to go out in oblivion and endless blank. Ugh!

In the same heart that so persistently loves to live is a propensity to sin—and there's where the trouble occurred in the beginning. We need no close definition here; suffice it to say that sin is known and conscious wrongdoing. Any man who thinks himself immune may ask his wife or his neighbors and secure sufficient data to bring him to his senses. "And sin bears results always. In spite of the primal delusion that "Ye shall not surely die," we know very well from the experience of the human race through ages that sin ^{has} ~~bears~~ its ^{inevitable consequences} ~~results~~, and that there is no very good human way of getting away from them.

If life is life and sin is sin, then death is death, and the divine fiat has gone forth that the soul that sinneth shall surely die. The punishment of sin is not merely suffering, nor imprisonment, nor fines, nor inconvenience, but death. And unless God is somehow mocked, there is going to be a reckoning on that basis sooner or later.

Nevertheless, life and death are relative terms and matters of degree. Some

people live more than others. And most of us have known days in which we have lived more than in weeks or months under other circumstances and stimuli. On a California hillside there lives a man who has come from some South American country. He has no knowledge of his parentage, he does not know whether he ever had any surname, he cannot identify a single letter of the alphabet; even figures are unintelligible. He has no human associations to enlighten him; there he exists with three cows and two horses and a few chickens for companions—life seemingly narrowed to almost its narrowest limits. Close by lives a retired minister. He is a graduate of three schools, he has spent years in travel, he has achieved results along lines of original research, he keeps in the closest touch with leading men and current events, and is sought for counsel by men who bear heavy burdens of public responsibility. Is it an exaggeration to say that he lives more in a day than the nameless illiterate lives in a year? Helen Keller is a miracle and lives a throbbing life of interest and power; but even so, Helen

Keller is dead on two sides: she has no correspondence with the world of sight nor the world of sound.

Death is ~~also~~^{often} a matter of progression. A man may atrophy. He may wear out and dry up and cut off and harden until only the husk of life is left. It is possible to die progressively by neglect. Many a family life has begun with love and sincerity and by sheer atrophy come to be but a skeleton. The love of God in a human heart may fade out and die by asphyxiation. Progressive paralysis of soul may be the cause of many a spiritual death. Life may be turned in upon itself and consumed by its own fires till nothing but a cinder is left.

Eternal life and eternal death are closely linked with the life and death that we now know. They are the ultimate result of the life and death that we now know in daily experience, the final factor in the great problem of existence. If eternal life be the gift of God, eternal death is man's own choice. The soul that sinneth, it shall die.

There is one form of death more terrible than any other. It is suicide. Death may be tragic, it may be glorious; but when a

man by his own act ends his earth-life there is a sense of finality which gives the tragedy its sting. Man alone of all created beings on the earth has the power of conscious self-destruction, and it seems as if a man who would do such a thing must be dead already. The Son of man had power to lay down his life and to take it up again, but in that act of divine self-renunciation there is sublime sacrifice, not self-destruction.

Sin is a fatal thing. Sin is not a question of relation to penalty; it is a blood disease, a ^{matter} thing of ~~literal~~ life and death. It is not a question of convenience, but of existence. Every conscious wrong act leaves a scar. Every sin seams the soul. Every foul thought blackens the heart. Every evil habit tightens its clutches about the throat of the spirit. Every unclean act deadens the accuracy of spiritual sensitiveness. Every step on the downward road takes the soul farther on into the region of poison and disease. Sin continued means dulled senses, deadened nerves, sluggish reactions, careless thinking, lowered ideals, vitiated vitality—in short, *lessened life*. Death by

inches creeps unobserved upon the victim of continued sin. Farther and farther he goes, lower and lower he sinks until sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

One of the most perfect illustrations of the relation between sin and death is that of Macbeth. We meet him first, a man of good character, in favor with the king, successful in his enterprises. Evil suggestions came to him, and to them he yielded and murdered the king. But when Macbeth slew Duncan he also destroyed something in himself. Macbeth had murdered sleep, and vain washing of guilty hands could not bring back the dead. Next he killed Banquo, but with the same act he murdered his own peace. Then he went on killing right and left till he destroyed every good thing in himself and left a demon raging in sin. Dead were gratitude, kindness, compassion, faith, while the evil impulses, dormant in every life and controlled in every good life, reigned supreme. In the last stage, when all is gone but an evil existence, Macbeth longs for death; life had lost its last attraction. One by one the lamps of life had gone out till the

sword of Macduff put out the last, and Macbeth was no more on the list of living men. But everything worth while had been dead long before. When the last spark of vitality goes out in a hardened sinner the man was nine tenths dead already.

Come with me to a city hospital and into the lowest men's wards. There lies a bloated figure, contaminated in body, blasted in soul. Where are the baby fingers that once were his? Where are the boyhood hopes? Dead. Where are the spirits and plans of youth? Where is the pure love of a good woman? Where are manly vigor and self-respect and the once clean record and all possible usefulness in life? Where is anything left to live for? Every vestige of the man is dead but the slender thread of physical life and a bruised reed of a soul. The man is dead already. Every sin that helped to bring him there has been a nail in his coffin. An hour later the physician comes in, pauses a moment, and says, "He is dead." Yes, he had been dying for years, and the last breath was but the end of the long conflict.

And this is what sin does. It kills every good thing. It makes of a human soul a loathsome corpse of its former self.

Who is this painted, tainted, loathsome creature, this hideous caricature of woman-kind? Every noble instinct is crushed out, every holy motive is smeared, every tender thought is dead, every womanly instinct is bestialized, every divine impulse is perverted. Who is she? She is the living death! She is sin in its last slimy, sordid sequence. She is sin when it is finished!

This is too strong? Who, then, is this frivolous maiden, playing fast and loose with holy things, flippant, irreverent, and careless? She is no wreck on life's shore! No, but she stands with her maiden's feet in the splash of the waves that roll up from the sea of sin! She may play with the water till it feels no longer cold, and then one day, or night, some wave of temptation will sweep her from her feet and she is lost, and lost forever!

What about the other side? Who is this young man of the fast and reckless life, with the air of conceit and confidence? He goes with the tough crowd, he despises

sacred things, he goes in for "a time"! He is not dead? No, not yet; but he too is playing with the waves of the fatal sea. He gets farther and farther from the shore, till some great comber of temptation rolls him out to sea, and he is no more. And by and by, when sin is finished, the broken and bloated souls of these young people, dead in trespasses and in sins, shall be thrown up on eternity's shore to enter the second death that knows no resurrection. Dead? Yes, dying these many years!

There is forgiveness for the sinner if he turns in time, but there is an essential unpardonableness about all sin. Sin against the light begets darkness. Sin against God involves separation from God. And the unpardonableness of it is this: sin bringeth forth death, and even God cannot pardon a dead man. How can he? Every sin allowed to run to its fatal end cuts a man off from all forgiveness; there is nothing left of him to forgive.

This is the end of every godless life. The soul shrinks, the eyes dim, the powers are dulled; the life wasted, the sinner dies by degrees till the last spark of the smoking

flax snuffs out and then the burned-out cinder of a soul goes out to meet the second death and wander in outer darkness amid the refuse of the universe—dead in the absolute.

But the cure! Yes, thank God, there is a cure. Sin is a blood disease; only blood can cure it. The only cure for death is life. "There is a fountain filled with blood, . . . and sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains." There is a cure for death: it is life, life given for the forgiveness of guilty sinners. It has never failed, it will not fail now. It has saved an innumerable company of those who have joined their testimony with the shout of the redeemed of all ages. "The wages of sin is death." Yes, but go on: "The gift of God is eternal life"! Which will you choose? Sing it this way if you like:

There is a fountain filled with life,
That flows from Calvary;
And all who drink its healing stream,
Shall be from death made free.

XX

A MAN

^{up}T Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your
ways,
Balking the end half won, for an instant dole of
praise.
Stand to your work and be wise, certain of tongue
and pen,
Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a
world of men. J

—*Rudyard Kipling.*

But I, I sympathize with man, not God;
I think I was a man for chiefly this;
And when I stand beside a dying bed,
It's death to me. . . .
And I a man, as men are now, and not
As men may be hereafter, feel with men
In the agonizing present.

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

And a man shall be as an hiding place from the
wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of
water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock
in a weary land.—*Isaiah.* 32².

XX

A MAN

THE atmosphere of the desert pervades Palestine as that of the ice does Alaska, or the mountains round about Denver. The land of milk and honey and corn and wine was always in sharp contrast with the barren sands and stunted brush of the desert beyond.

The sands of life's deserts are always creeping up on the promised land. In times of prosperity it is graft and corruption. In seasons of opulence it is the vices of leisure. In times of trouble it is the canker of war. But in some form the desert is never far away. There are always factors in our lives that will destroy us if not withstood. What we need is an antidote for the desert.

Isaiah had such a cure. A man should be a hiding place from the wind. There were oases in the desert. Great rocks lifted their strong heads against the burning

winds and stopped the sand drift until a fountain could spring up and great trees take root. There are some men whose lives shelter the rest of us. They lift their strong souls against the drift of the desert across human life. There are refreshing personalities that renew our strength like rivers of water in a dry place. They are coverts from the tempest, they are shadows of a great rock in a weary land.

Perhaps Isaiah meant some reference to the coming Messiah; but if so it was only as climax to the great truth that in strong personality is the shelter from the desert of life. What he obviously meant was this—that manhood is the rock in the desert. “A man,” (any man, every man who is strong enough to stand up against the drift, ~~may~~ become an oasis in the arid waste of experience for the multitudes who in themselves cannot withstand the sweep of the monsoon. To break the force of social temptation, and check the power of the drift of vice and materialism, God provides men who shall stand like rocks.) What Isaiah sees is that the strength of the nation is in character, that final values are in

character, and that the refuge of the weak and oppressed is in character.

Israel was facing a serious problem of defense. Treaties, alliances, combinations were in process of negotiation. Armies were to be mobilized. Politics were complicated by secret understanding. Diplomacy and compromise were in the air. Strength through skillful manipulation of affairs was the ideal of the rulers.

Across all this current cuts the sharp, ringing word of Isaiah. Manhood is stronger than diplomacy. Character is mightier than armies. Personality is worth more than dreadnaughts for national defense. May not the nations of the twentieth century A. D. take a lesson from the prophet of the eighth century B. C., and know that there is no final security except that which lives in the manhood of citizens and the character of people? All progress is measured more by men than by measures; the key to all successful reform is in leadership strong enough and wise enough and good enough to stand as a rock in the desert and afford shelter for the weaker lives, which are losing in the battle with

the sand. The story of our own national life is a record of great names that have stood as shelters, and back of them is the great record written and unwritten of less known heroes who have furnished the personal leadership on the level of the common life.

George Adam Smith tells us that there have been drifts across human life through history, and that every one of them has been withstood by a man, if at all. There is the primal fear of nature; there is the hardness of heart to believe; there is the power of brute force; there was the drift of hardened Jewish custom in the first Christian century; there was the decaying life of Rome; there was the Diet of Worms. And against these devastating forces from the desert stood Noah and Abraham and Isaiah and Paul and Augustine and Luther. Against the formalism of the eighteenth century stood Wesley. Against human slavery stood a host of men. Against the drift of national disruption stood Lincoln. Against modern graft and corruption and greed stand a band of men to-day who bare their backs to the storm and in the shelter of

their lives purity and hope and honesty and clean politics are beginning to take root and grow.

Sin is the most deadly drift in all human history. From the beginning no barrier of philosophy, education, government, law, or penance has been able to stand against it. Jesus Christ alone successfully stood against it, the Rock of Ages! Have you struggled against the blast till you felt your feet slowly but surely sinking in the whirling sands of temptation? Draw close to the "Rock that is higher than" thou and be safe! Sin can never again get the death grip on the world that it had before Jesus stood against it and stopped its power.

What the world needs is more (men who will stand up against the current and afford shelter to weaker brothers who go down in the flood. There are many echoes, many followers, ~~It is easy to copy, easy to fall in behind some strong path maker.~~ But there must always be men and women who will serve as shelters in the time of storm. ~~He who stands saves all about him.~~ ul You cannot be a rock in the desert and be content to echo the last man you have

heard talk. You cannot be a rock and do merely what some one else does. This call of God is to the strong. Some one is leaning on ^{us} you, no matter who ^{we} you are. Not every soul can be a towering cliff, but every ^{one} soul can lift ^{his} its head high enough to shelter some weaker one in its shadow. And when enough men stand up against the drift it will be cured, and the wilderness will become the garden of the Lord. Decomposed sand may become fertile soil, and a sinful world may blossom like Eden when once the drift is stopped and the springs allowed to flow. The moral force of the world is simply the sum total of individual backbones.

It costs something to stand and take the sting of the drift. The world's great rocks in the desert are scarred by the flying flint and worn with the grind of the tempest. The world's masterpieces are written on pages wet with tears, and some of them are written in blood. There is no easy way. Who helps most suffers most. The cross whereon was wrought human redemption was wet with the blood of the Son of God. It cost Luther something to defy the Pope

at Rome. It cost Savonarola something to go to the chamber of torture. It cost Stephen to die a martyr's death outside the gate of Jerusalem. It cost the Redeemer of mankind something to break down the middle wall of partition between God and men; but they paid the price, and life has been increasingly different ever since.

(What is it that attracts us in strong men? Is it not just this—our sense of security in their mastery of the storms of life? Refreshing lives are always strong. Such lives enrich, fertilize the thirsty land, and the contagion of their strength makes weaker men rise to their own higher powers of efficiency.

And after all the fever and fret and toil and turmoil of life, what is the supreme value that makes the living worth while? Is it not in the reaction which we get out of the life that we live? ~~What life brings back to us counts large in our appraisal of the things that abide.~~ Every man gets some reaction from the life that he lives. The politician gets power. The actor gets applause, the captain of industry gets or-

ganized results, ~~the murderer gets blood.~~ And the man who stands as a shelter in the time of storm, what does he get? He gets the reaction from the lives that he has helped. And ~~be it known that~~ there is in all life no sweeter, more completely satisfying reward than the reaction from hearts that you have helped. This it is that keeps men on the mission field far from home and comforts. This keeps men steady to the most disagreeable tasks, ~~living amid filth and squalor in city slums.~~ This keeps the Sunday school teacher faithful to a class of unruly pupils. This richly repays a mother for all the years of toil and anxiety. No reward comes back to us from the experiences of life that so thoroughly repays all that life has cost us as the satisfaction of knowing that ~~some one else has crept up into our shadow and found there a refuge from the stormy blast.~~

*have
in it
we use
we use
we use*

What kind of a man would you be if you could be the kind of man that you would be? A hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land?

BX Miller, George Amos, Bp., b.1868.
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